This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google books

https://books.google.com

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WAVES · WHEELS · WINGS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

IN ACTION.
A 'Spitfire' destroying a 'Heinkel IIIK'.

Digitized by Google

# WAVES · WHEELS · WINGS

*An Autobiography*

by

COMDR. SIR WALTER WINDHAM
Late R.N., R.I.M., R.N.R., R.N.L.I., M.S.

HUTCHINSON & CO. (*Publishers*) LTD.
LONDON : NEW YORK : MELBOURNE

Digitized by Google

**P.P.C.**

*DO YOU REALISE*

that in order to maintain book production many craftsmen have come out of retirement? The Printers' Pension Corporation has promised to help these people, when they retire again, and in addition requires funds immediately to assist widows and war orphans. Will you show your gratitude by sending a donation or subscription to the Appeals Department, Printers' Pension Corporation, 10, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.2?

DA 5
.7
W54A3

Made and Printed in Great Britain at

*Greycaines*

(Taylor Garnett Evans & Co. Ltd.)
Watford, Herts

Digitized by Google

TO

MY WIFE

WITH WHOSE INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

I WROTE

THIS BOOK.

(*My Motto*)

"DO THE BEST AND LEAVE THE REST".

*Quotation by Bishop Fraser.*

A*

M262315

Digitized by Google

# PREFACE

I FEEL I would like to write a few lines to say how much I regret my husband did not live to see "Waves, Wheels and Wings" published.

My husband took so much time and care in compiling the book, and it was some satisfaction to him to know that this country at last realized the importance of a strong Air Force which he had advocated for so long.

HELENE B. WINDHAM.

Digitized by Google

# FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

I HAVE GLADLY RESPONDED TO THE REQUEST, WITH WHICH Messrs. Hutchinson have honoured me, to write my autobiography. My wife has often said that I should do so, and particularly that my papers on Aviation should be arranged for publication.

There is something in ancestry, in the blood as we say, that seems to compel a man to do this or that. From some records of my ancestors, dating from 1461 (which I have placed at the end of this book), telling of their character and vicissitudes in war on land and sea and in exploration, it may be inferred from whence I derived the 'wanderlust' that took me as a boy from a comfortable home, from parents and brothers and sisters, to face the hazards and hardships of seafaring on an old sailing-ship and kept my feet on the path of adventure and travel throughout many years.

May I briefly explain the title of my book, which will become apparent to my readers as they proceed, *Waves, Wheels, Wings*? The meaning of 'Waves' in my life I have already indicated. Later, I had some part in the beginnings of the automobile and in the infancy of Aviation. In the aeroplane I soon foresaw not only beneficent uses in peace but dire potentialities in war. I can claim to have had a share in the effort to arouse our authorities and people to the perils which the development of this invention held for the security of Great Britain and the British Empire. Had these warnings been heeded in time, how much tragedy and suffering might have been avoided!

I must explain that this book was begun in 1939 and finished in 1940, although for various reasons it has not seen the light till now. What I say about the deadly character of the aeroplane was set down well before harsh experience in various theatres of war had begun to drive home the lesson, all too tardily learnt even then.

I have also set down some of my experiences as a King's Messenger, in which capacity and in others I came into contact with many notabilities of my time.

Digitized by Google

If errors may have crept into these pages I ask kind indulgence. My thanks are due to my late brother, Lieut.-Colonel C. J. Windham, C.I.E., to Mr. Harry Harper and to Mr. George Craig for the help they have given me in research and compilation.

Much as I dislike the repetition of 'I' and 'my', the reader will, I think, agree that this is inseparable from an autobiography.

Digitized by Google

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | 'Down to the Sea in Ships' | 11 |
| II. | The Story of the Royal Indian Marine | 17 |
| III. | The Wreck of the Troopship 'Warren Hastings' | 23 |
| IV. | Fighting the Plague at Bombay | 33 |
| V. | In the Lifeboat Service | 35 |
| VI. | My King's Messenger Days | 38 |
| VII. | The Dawn of the 'Horseless Age' | 43 |
| VIII. | The Army and the Automobile | 50 |
| IX. | Early Rungs in the Aerial Ladder | 55 |
| X. | How I Founded the First British Aeroplane Club | 60 |
| XI. | The History-making Channel Flights of 1909 | 64 |
| XII. | The Thrills of Early Aviation | 69 |
| XIII. | First Aeroplanes in Asia, and First Air Mail | 75 |
| XIV. | The Royal Coronation Air Mail | 82 |
| XV. | Memories of the Last War | 90 |
| XVI. | In the World of Politics | 98 |
| XVII. | The Training of the Dog | 104 |
| XVIII. | 'Wrinkles' on Salmon Fishing | 106 |
| XIX. | Shetland and the Shetlanders | 115 |
| XX. | South Africa Revisited | 121 |
| XXI. | Pageantry and Sport in India | 127 |
| XXII. | Hunting the Pig, the Panther, and the Bear | 137 |
| XXIII. | Egypt, the Holy Land, and Italy | 142 |
| XXIV. | The Past, the Present, and the Future | 145 |
| XXV. | How I Came to Inherit a Wanderlust | 157 |
| | Postscript | 166 |
| | Index | 167 |


Digitized by Google

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


In Action: a 'Spitfire' destroying a 'Heinkel IIIK' . *Frontispiece*

The Author . . . . . *facing page* 28

Picture of my Mother . . . . . „ „ 29

Drawing by Landseer of my Mother in her Cradle „ „ 44

*Ss. Sobraon* running before the Wind . . . . „ „ 45

Lifeboat in a Heavy Sea . . . . . „ „ 60

The wreck of the *Warren Hastings:* the author is seen being dragged off the rocks . . . . „ „ 61

King Edward VII at Marienbad outside the Weimar Hotel . . . . . „ „ 76

Jenatzy—the winner of the first Irish Motor Race: The author—who had charge of the winning-post—telling him to make way for the others . „ „ 77

The Author with his 'Double Monoplane' at Wembley Park . . . . . „ „ 92

Aviation Members assembled at the House of Commons Luncheon in honour of Blériot: *from left to right*—M. Blériot's Secretary, Madame Blériot, Blériot, the Author, Sir Benjamin Stone „ „ 93

M. Cody outside the House of Commons . . „ „ 108

My Biplane at Allahabad with the Pilot and Myself in Picture . . . . . „ „ 109

Monoplane on the banks of the Ganges: the first to land in Asia . . . . . „ „ 124

The names of all the Aviators who took part in the Doncaster Meeting: the first to be held in Great Britain . . . . . „ „ 125

The Author's Monoplane, built by himself, at the Doncaster Meeting . . . . . „ „ 140

Imperial Grouse Shoot at Bikanir at which over 6,000 birds were shot—the record up to that time „ „ 141


Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

# CHAPTER I

## 'DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS'

I ENTERED THE WORLD RATHER SOONER THAN I WAS EXPECTED, and clothing for me had to be borrowed from a coastguard station near where I was born in Bognor. Thus I began life, so to speak, in nautical garb. Soon the lure of the sea was to call me. I disliked books and book-learning, but I was fascinated by machinery and mechanical problems. My parents suggested different careers, but the sea prevailed, and on a day I am never likely to forget I went aboard as a young apprentice the sailing ship *Paramatta* at Blackwall, in the London docks, bound on my first voyage to Australia. It was the beginning of a life of adventure for a young apprentice in the old clippers which took on an average ninety to one hundred days on their outward voyages and somewhat less homeward.

In my four years' apprenticeship under sail I served not only in the full-rigged *Paramatta* and *Sobraon*, but also in the barque-rigged ship *The Duke of Athol*. Apprentices worked as hard as ordinary seamen, scraping, splicing, painting, going aloft to bend or furl sail. The swaying yards stretched out on either side; only the foot-rope was between the sailor and the water, and a slip would have meant the last of him. There would have been the cry 'Man overboard', but no boat ready to rescue.

The old tars said life on the clippers was harder than that of prisoners in Portland Gaol and our food worse. The salt beef we called 'old horse', since it was reputed to be from the carcasses of worn-out London cab-horses! Hence the shanty we used to sing:

SOLO: O, blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down.

*Chorus:* Whey, hey, blow the man down.
(The pull is on the 'whey' and 'blow')

SOLO: O, blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down.

*Chorus:* Give us some time to blow the man down.
(The pull is on the 'give' and 'blow').

Old horse, old horse, what brought you here?
Whey, hey, blow the man down.
(The pull was on the words 'whey' and 'blow')

From Carasque to Portland Pier
Give us some time to blow the man down.



Digitized by Google

You've carted coal for many a year,
Whey, hey, blow the man down.

But now run down with sore abuse,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

They cut thee up for sailors' use,
Whey, hey, blow the man down.

The sailors, they do thee despise,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

They turn thee o'er and spurn thine eyes,
Whey, hey, blow the man down.

They pick the flesh from off thy bones,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

And heave the rest to Davy Jones,
Whey, hey, blow the man down.

Another version, the lines of which are as follow, ran:

*Chorus:* Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

First came the whale, the king of the sea,
Who jumped on the deck crying, "Helm hard a-lee!"

Then came the shark with his big dorsal fin,
Who jumped on the deck and cried, "Take the jib in!"

Then came the flounder with his big chuckle head,
Who jumped on the chains and took a heave of the lead.

Then came the lobster, with his big crooked legs,
Cried, "All hands to muster and I'll find the pegs."

Then came the shrimp, the smallest of all,
Who jumped on the deck and cried, "Main topsail haul!"

Then came the porpoise with his big ugly snout,
Who jumped on the deck and cried, "Put ship about."

Then came the cod, the last of these few,
Who served out the grog to the rest of the crew.

Our fare, besides the beef and the salt pork, was porridge, hard biscuits, tea, and coffee and a weekly pound of butter and sugar. Once a week we had the luxury of 'soft tack', our name for bread. We knew that the biscuits were usually full of weevils, and we brought these creatures out by putting them on the galley stove, cutting off their heads as they emerged.



Digitized by Google

Other shanties we sang were less ribald. 'Rolling Home', one of the capstan shanties so called because they were sung only when the capstan was in use, recalls to me our ship beginning the homeward voyage. Yards had been hoisted and sails shaken out in readiness for the breeze; the small tug had been ordered to let go the hawser, and the tug-master had shouted "Good-bye, captain". Then from our ship the song would roll across the waters, the words being something like this:

Now we're bound to Merry England,
To the land which gave us birth,
To those friends who long have left us,
Dearest friends we have on earth.

As we give you our last farewell,
As we leave your rocky shore,
As we one and all are hastening
To the land which we adore.

*Chorus:* Rolling home, Rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea,
Rolling home to Merry England,
That land so dear to me.

And we'll give you our last farewell,
Every man which can clap on,
As we heave around the capstan
We'll sing this well-known song.

*Chorus:* Rolling home, rolling home, etc.

Versification had other than sentimental uses for the sailor. After four years in the Merchant Service I sat my examination for Second Mate's certificate, and managed to pass the tests. There were many questions about the rule of the road at sea, the answers to which were memorized by such verses as:

Green to green, red to red,
Perfect safety—go ahead.
If upon my port is seen
A steamer's starboard light of green,
There's nothing else for me to see,
That green to port keeps clear of me.

I have vivid early memories of the huge seas off the Cape of Good Hope—in sailor language 'running the Eastern down'. The S.W. winds—called the trade-winds—blow for months on end, causing mountainous waves, the crest of one seeming to be a



Digitized by Google

mile from the other. As I watched their majestic motion I felt the solemnity of the Biblical words: 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.' Then there were the wonderful sunsets. Every colour seemed to blend and to radiate from the heavens upon the waters; the glory of it all transcended words and would have baffled even the genius of Turner to depict on canvas.

At sea we had little or no time to play or to read. The only book I read was *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. In the tropics the ship was steady enough for boxing and testing one's skill at cock-fighting. We would have our feet slung up some four feet above the deck to try how far we could mark the deck with chalk, using one hand only. Singing was our chief amusement, usually with banjo accompaniment. We were hard as nails.

Other early experiences were three visits to the beautiful island of St. Helena, with its wonderful verdure and canaries flying from tree to tree. A ladder with several hundred steps led to the top of the mountain and we amused ourselves by sliding down the rail. Another memory is that of Tristan d'Cunha, which I visited about 1886. It is called the loneliest of islands, and merits the name, since it is in the middle of the Atlantic—hundreds of miles from anywhere. The inhabitants, who are all intermarried and chiefly of Spanish origin, came aboard and asked us, for the Church, for a broom and a bottle of wine, giving us in exchange many of their black and red pigs that squealed as they lay, with feet tied, in the boats in several inches of water. The island swarmed with a variety of sea birds. I tried to eat the egg of an albatross, and the nauseating taste remained with me for a long time.

Much has been written about the rounding of the Horn. I went through this ordeal when I had shipped before the mast for my homeward voyage to London after my sailing had taken me four times round the world. It was July, 1887, in the depth of winter. A gale from the north blew us down to lat. 60° 50′ south before it shifted and we could head north again. The thermometer was well below zero and the cold intense. Decks were a sheet of ice and we had to strew cinders on them from the galley fire. We had double purchase tackle on the wheel so that two men, one on either side, could steer. Ropes were hard as iron bars and sails frozen stiff as boards. The sun just peeped over the horizon at noon and then dipped, leaving us in darkness again. Conditions grew worse, and the ship was buried in mountainous seas. Our skipper, Captain Brown, an 'old sea dog', who seldom spoke except to shout his orders above the storm and who walked



Digitized by Google

the poop day and night, announced that he was to bring the ship 'up' into the wind as he could 'run' no longer. He ordered life-lines to be stretched fore and aft, and, when all was ready, spoke a few words of cheer. Then down went the helm and gradually the ship came up into the wind. The sea to windward was like a mountain, an ugly curl on its crest. The old ship staggered and shook as great masses of water broke over her sides filling her to the bulwarks. For a moment it seemed all was over, but the old barque shook herself like a dog and the water poured through the scuppers and holes. The fore lower topsail was being torn to pieces, lashing itself against the yards; halyards and braces were all mixed up in the swirling water, but the ship had 'come to'. We were now some six hundred miles south of the Horn and out of danger; but our troubles were not over, for soon afterwards we ran short of water. A ship we sighted in the Doldrums before crossing the line gave us some and we supplemented our supply by rain water caught in sails stretched above the deck.

For many weeks on end we saw nothing around us except sea-birds, chiefly the albatross, which we caught by trailing a kind of sharpened triangle, baited with salt pork, fixed to a line behind the ship. When the birds were hauled aboard they were, curiously enough, always sick and could not fly off the deck. The bigger ones we used to kill and cut off their feet to be turned into tobacco pouches.

The cold far south was intense and the black-and-white Cape pigeons, driven by hunger, would come and take food from our hands. There were many other birds, among them the dark molly-hawk and Mother Cary's chickens in thousands. Flying fish we caught by the use of a lamp hung over the ship's side which attracted them on board. They were delicious, and were a much-appreciated addition to our larder since we had no fish on the voyage except benito, which we caught with lines from which dangled a white cloth with a hook, trailed from the dolphin striker below the bowsprit. Porpoises we caught by harpoon from the ship's bows and found their liver good eating—when we could get nothing better.

One vivid memory of my seafaring was that rare sight, an electric storm. It was night, and the sea which but for this wonderful illumination would have been pitch dark, glittered and scintillated with electricity.

The voyage was over at last and I stepped ashore and entered a public-house, but not to get a drink. I astonished the barmaid by asking for 'a big piece of new bread with plenty of fresh butter'. The look on her face I shan't forget, but bread and butter was all I craved for after weeks of privation and hard life.



Digitized by Google

One incident while I was on a sailing ship I must relate for those psychically inclined. When I was on deck one night in bright moonlight the man at the wheel suddenly asked me to take the helm as he said he saw his mother sitting on the topsail yard. I complied and he went up to the yard, where I could see him looking around. When he came down he said that what he had seen was curious and he could not explain it. The ship arrived at Sydney some sixty days later, and he showed me a letter with the news that his mother had died on such a day at a certain time. I worked out our position and found that the date of the incident on the ship and the time of death given in the letter coincided exactly.

After landing at Tilbury I joined the Royal Naval Reserve, and was ordered by the Admiralty to go on board H.M.S. *Shannon*, stationed in the Irish Command. I had also to undertake my training aboard H.M.S. *President*, now lying alongside the Thames Embankment. I feel very old when I think about that training. Guns were hauled with tackles and big hawsers (my typist wrote it 'horses'), and it was usually my task when guns were being loaded to place my thumb on the vent-hole lest any spark left in the gun after firing should ignite the charge. When on the *Shannon* as a midshipman one of my jobs was to see the grog served and taste it first. I was given and swallowed a gill (one quarter of a pint). The Petty Officer in charge stared, and when I asked him why, he said, "I wish I had a throat like yours, sir."

I cannot close this chapter without a tribute of admiration to the men of the Merchant Navy in the war. Day and night they face not only their natural enemy the sea, but great dangers above and below its surface. We, a seafaring nation, are apt to take their work as a mere matter of course. We broadcast their heroic actions and applaud their devotion; but what have we done for these men? By a stroke of the pen this service, our very life-line in this war, could be raised to a position of high honour by giving it an honorary title, such as the Royal Merchant Navy, leaving necessary adjustments to the Board of Trade. We must linger no longer. These men have given of their best and it is for us to see that they are amply and freely rewarded.

Let me, in conclusion, recall the verses by A. Cunningham, which convey the spirit and buoyancy of the men of the old sailing ships, progenitors of the men of the sea to-day:

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
  A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
  And bends the gallant mast;



Digitized by Google

And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

"O for a soft and gentle wind!"
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornéd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud;
But hark the music, mariners!
The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

# CHAPTER II

## THE STORY OF THE ROYAL INDIAN MARINE

INDIA LOOMS LARGE TO-DAY, AND IT WILL NOT BE INAPPROPRIATE if something is said about the Royal Indian Navy, whose development is one of the most interesting chapters in maritime history. I joined it in 1884, after completing my four years as an apprentice under sail, when it was Her Majesty's Indian Marine. The service had its origin in the seventeenth century when the East India Company, finding they needed protection against foreign interlopers, corsairs, privateers, and pirates, established what was known as the Honourable East India Company's Marine. It became in the eighteenth century the Bombay Marine; it enabled the Company to repel attack and to maintain normal trade. In 1865 the Indian Marine was disbanded as a combatant force and used solely for transport of troops and stores. There was a further change in 1877, when a regularly graded service was evolved, and finally, in accordance with the recommendations made by an official committee in 1926, the Indian Marine became the Royal Indian Navy. Its code of discipline was brought into line with



Digitized by Google

that of the other navies of the British Commonwealth and with that of His Majesty's Indian ships flying the White Ensign, and rates of pay and conditions were improved.

Time and again the value of the Service has been demonstrated—as in the Indian Mutiny and the Burmese War. In the war of 1914–1918, its officers, both on the active and retired list, were in almost every theatre of war, and the honours they received showed that they upheld worthily the old traditions of their service. Lieutenant Bowers, who, it will be remembered, lost his life in Scott's South Pole expedition, was an Indian Marine officer.

I am proud to have belonged to a Service which produced such a man. Scott's own appreciation of Bowers is the considered judgment of a man not prone to exaggerate: "I believe he is the hardest traveller that ever undertook a Polar journey, as well as the most undaunted. His untiring energy and astonishing physique enable him to continue to work under conditions which are absolutely paralysing to others."

When I joined the Service its officers, a most efficient body of men, were the pick of the Merchant Service, the crew being Indian. Some of these Indian seamen came from the seagoing population round the coast of India, chiefly from Ratnagherri, a district south of Bombay. During my service the Marine was used not only for the conveyance of troops in Indian waters, but also for the inspection of lighthouses and for the use of the Viceroy of India and other officers, station ships being allocated to all the big ports. Our full-dress uniform was of dark blue cloth with light blue facings on the lapels of the coat. The Star of India comprised the badge for our caps. Otherwise, white was our daily dress all the year round. The bows of our ships bore the Star of India accompanied by the words—'Heaven's Light Our Guide'.

During my service in Bombay, cholera broke out in one of the naval ships, and the Admiral ordered the victims of this scourge to be buried out at sea. The corpses were sewn up in ship's canvas, weighted with old furnace bars, and cast overboard, a salute being fired over them. But owing to insufficient weighting the bodies soon rose to the surface. Some said the reason was the vibration of the gunfire, others intense inflation caused by the heat, and so on. However, my job was to collect them, if possible. One case was reported to me of a dead lascar floating near the landing-place adjoining the Bombay Yacht Club. I tied the corpse by one leg to the stern of the pinnace and towed it to the open sea, where it was re-weighted and let go. There was a real rumpus over the incident, and the Bombay citizens would not eat fish for some time afterwards.

While I was serving in the Indian Marine plans were discussed



Digitized by Google

for its amalgamation with the Royal Navy. Two officers, one of them myself, were chosen to serve for a time in H.M.S. *Plassy*. I had the misfortune while on this ship to lose a torpedo in practice, and in fear and trembling I went ashore to the Admiral's bungalow to report the loss. His first remark was, "Have you had breakfast?" and when I said I had not, "Well, come in and have some. We'll talk about the torpedo afterwards." I did not enjoy my breakfast; the torpedo, which had cost nearly £1,000 was, so to speak, sticking in my throat. The torpedo was eventually recovered.

Unfortunately, the idea of amalgamation did not work, and consequently had to be given up. After this, Admiral Kennedy, the C.-in-C., gave me a job in a torpedo-boat in which I got what is called 'hard lying' money—in those days certainly appreciated.

Admiral Kennedy was a great sportsman, and one of his favourite places was the island of Roderiques in the Indian Ocean. Sometimes he would send for the Middies and, to their delight, tell them to take his barge and go ashore to shoot a stag. If they were successful, which they usually were, he would pipe 'all hands on deck', and, with a fiddler playing some popular sea shanty, that stag would be hoisted to the fore yardarm.

Another of the Admiral's amusements was one which gave the men practice in Morse signalling. He would send a message to some ship close by, asking one of the officers to play chess with him. Numbered boards were used, and the moves of the players were transmitted from ship to ship by signal—for example, 'Queen moves to square 13', and so on.

Many are the stories told of this Admiral. Here is one, out of his splendid book, *Hurrah for the Life of a Sailor*. While walking the bridge he noticed a young man on deck. Turning to the officer, the Admiral asked, "Who is that lad?" "A young cadet just joined, sir," was the reply. "Send him up here," ordered the Admiral. The boy duly arrived on the bridge and was asked, "Who is your father?", "Where were you educated?" and so on, the Admiral finishing up by saying, "I suppose it's the old story of the fool of the family being sent to sea?" "Oh, no, sir," answered the cadet, "since your days things have changed!"

On one visit Admiral Kennedy paid to the *Plassy* he brought his wife and daughter and told me to show them round. After explaining the torpedo, I accidentally brought down a heavy swinging hatch on to the ends of my fingers and practically severed them. The Admiral tried to comfort me by saying a parrot-fish took his thumb off, and that he ordered his coxswain to give it to his favourite panther, which he kept aboard his ship. Our ship's surgeon bandaged the fingers up and afterwards the Admiral took me in his barge to his ship to get them properly attended to.



Digitized by Google

The flagship's surgeon said, "Are you sure they are on the right way? If so, I had better leave them as they are." I was then sent off to hospital in Bombay, where I noticed that a certain crow always sat on the verandah rail. I asked why and was told, "He is waiting for the tips of your fingers; they know everything!"

Not long after I was ordered to go south to visit the exiled King of Burma, King Theebaw, at Ratnagherri. I found him pleasant and interesting. Some ten years later I had the pleasure of meeting his grandchildren, who were living in Allahabad, in the United Provinces. There I organized the first aerial post, as described in a later chapter. While with the exiled king I noticed that the legs of his party were all thickly tattooed.

I recall an experience when I was on the Royal Indian Marine ship *Mayo* which I think was unique. We had entered the mouth of the great Hoogli River in India and hoisted a signal to say we wanted a pilot. At this time a British India ship was sighted astern, and the pilot boat deliberately altered course from us and headed towards it, because this ship had heavier draught than ours and a higher pilotage fee was payable. Our captain, furious at what he felt to be an insult to our Service, took charge himself and piloted the ship up a river so difficult to navigation that pilots are trained to it from boyhood, to Calcutta—a great feat of seamanship.

About the year 1889 I was appointed to the Indian Marine ship *Enterprise*, but I was not to join this vessel. While in harbour at Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands, she was caught in one of those cyclones that come up suddenly, and although she had steam up and both engines were full speed astern she was driven on the rocks, dragging both anchors with a full length of cable. No one was saved except the Genoese butler, and he owed his life to convict women in the women's quarters of the penal servitude settlement for all India, which is at Port Blair. Forming a human chain the women waded out and dragged the butler through the surf to the shore. For this the women were granted a reprieve by the Government of India. Later, I saw the damage done by the storm and could appreciate its fury. It had carried the roof of the Governor's house from the island to the mainland, several miles away, and torn up trees and swept them out to sea.

After my visit to King Theebaw I was ordered aboard the Government boat on the Irrawaddy and I made several trips to Mandalay. Those trips were rather exciting because of the great masses of logs which, lashed together, floated down and had to be avoided. The sight of elephants at Rangoon collecting and stacking the logs was most interesting. With wonderful precision they placed each log in perfect alignment; if a log should protrude ever so little out the elephant pushed it into line with its



Digitized by Google

head. When the dinner bell sounded the elephants dropped their loads and went off.

While serving on the Irrawaddy River I nearly set on fire the club premises, which had been King Theebaw's palace. I knocked over a paraffin lamp and started a conflagration. I contrived to kick the burning lamp along a wooden corridor and out into a yard, but there was a trail of flame and only prompt spraying with sand by a number of natives saved the building.

On my ship was a gunner—a Greek of fine type—whom I used to ask to dine with me. I gave him permission one day at his request to go in search of a tiger which he had heard was lurking in the surrounding jungle. He did not return, and natives sent out to look for him found only his sun topee!

While on this river service I had proof of what I had heard in youth about the sagacity of the horse. I kept a pony aboard, and one evening I rode into the jungle, carefully noting my bearings and direction. But when I tried to retrace my way I found I had entirely lost my bearings. Then I dropped reins on the pony's neck. He took his own way in what seemed the wrong direction and brought me to the ship. But for the animal's sense of direction we might have lost our lives through mosquito or bee stings or the fangs of wild beasts.

I had few opportunities of sport in India, since my work made it difficult for me to get leave. I have a vivid recollection of a shooting expedition arranged for me by my brother, Lieut.-Colonel C. J. Windham, C.I.E., who was then British Resident at Jodphur in residence at Mt. Abu, a small hill-station in Rajputana. News had been received that bears were in the hills and I started off with a party in the evening. For miles we walked single file through jungle, and down the rock-strewn bed of a dried-up river. At our proposed destination for the night I made myself fairly comfortable on the wooden *machan* or platform which the *shikari* or head hunter built for me in a tree above where the bears were expected. But there was to be no bear-shooting for me. The *shikari* had left me saying that he would be close at hand and would come if I fired a shot. Then arose a terrible thunderstorm that re-echoed among the hills, and there was torrential rainfall. I fired a shot and climbed down the tree. I was about to light my paraffin lamp when the beaters all approached me, bending with the usual "Salaam, Sahib, Salaam," and appealing to me not to do so because of the *majid*. I thought they meant mosquitoes. When I insisted on lighting the lamp the men threatened to leave me to find my own way home, and I capitulated. Next morning my brother told me that if I had lit the lamp I might have been attacked by wild bees, which the natives called *majid*,



Digitized by Google

and which swarmed in the jungles. He also told me that the Maharajah of Bikaner, who had shot many hundreds of tigers, was terrified of bees, which he regarded as more dangerous than wild beasts; they had been known to sting a mule to death. A memorial to a certain Captain in a church at Pachmarhi, a small hill-station in the Central Provinces, records that he was 'stung to death by wild bees within a few yards of this spot'. Experienced sportsmen in India usually carry a rug or hooded cloak as a protection against this enemy. My father, when with his regiment (the Rifle Brigade) at Bareilly after the Mutiny, was nearly drowned when he threw himself into the lake at Naini Tal to evade an attack of bees.

I may relate one somewhat unpleasant experience of my service in the Indian Marine. On several occasions my Captain of that time ordered his boat alongside, and when it arrived he said, "Leave it there." At dinner time he refused to allow the men in the boat to go to their *khana*, and the boat sometimes lay for hours alongside. This and other incidents which made me suspicious I reported to the Admiral. He sent a high official, who inspected the ship and said to the Captain that it was "a bit dirty" (it was, in fact, beautifully clean). The Captain's reply was: "If it is, you can damn well clean it yourself." Afterwards, acting on orders, I appointed Lieutenant Waters to conduct my Captain to the Calaba detention home. On the way he asked where he was going, and Waters replied, "You are not well, sir, and want a change; you are going to a home near by." The Captain then asked whether he had any papers, and when Waters produced these the Captain put them in his pocket. At the home Waters said, "I have brought this man . . ." but the Captain intervened with "No, no; that is what he says; take no notice of it. I have the papers." Waters was detained until the matter was cleared up!

While serving out East I met a young P. & O. officer named Mansfield, a daring and courageous man, who brought out a balloon and made one of the first parachute descents in the East. Mansfield, about 1890, was even then ahead of the parachutists of to-day. In Bombay I watched him through a large telescope as he jumped from his balloon at a great height. On his descent he opened and closed his parachute like a big umbrella; then, to the delight of the spectators, he took out a small Union Jack and waved it.

He asked me to retrieve his balloon, which fell in Kolaba Bay, part of Bombay Harbour, a few miles from the Victoria Gardens, from which he had started. I brought the balloon aboard my ship *Tenasserim* and there repaired the damage it had suffered on descent. Mansfield's next endeavour, from the same place,



Digitized by Google

proved fatal. The balloon could not be filled fully with gas, and it was seen to have a tear in it. Not wishing to disappoint the crowd, he attempted, against our advice, to try an ascent. No sooner had the balloon ascended than the sun expanded it and down it came before Mansfield could loosen his parachute.

So ended the life of a splendid young man who, had he lived, no doubt would have helped our country in the art of parachute descents, on which to-day the safety of so many pilots depends. Like many who were brought up on sailing ships, he did not know what danger meant. Without holding on, he used to run along the yards. He was a fine type of sailor.

At Delhi I had the honour of meeting Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton Rice. I met Dr. Hamilton Rice many times afterwards in New York and on his many visits to London. He asked me if I would undertake to conduct a party of explorers into the upper Amazon River, then an unexplored country, but as I was subject to attacks of fever I reluctantly had to decline. Dr. Hamilton Rice, however, made the trip; took his private yacht up the estuary of this river, and from there proceeded right up into the upper part of the Amazon. He gave many interesting lectures in London on this trip and also talks on the animal and bird life of the region. I visited with him the museum in New York of which he is one of the heads, and was struck by the wonderful beauty of it, far exceeding anything we have in this country.

## CHAPTER III

### THE WRECK OF THE TROOPSHIP *Warren Hastings*

ONE OF MY OUTSTANDING MEMORIES IS THE WRECK OF THE BIG Indian troopship *Warren Hastings* in January, 1897. On board, in addition to our officers and crew, we had just over 1,200 officers and men of the 1st Battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, under the command of Colonel Forestier Walker, and units of the 2nd York and Lancaster Regiment, with their wives and children. We were on our way from the Cape to Bombay. I was on the bridge as officer of the watch on the darkest night I ever knew. Rain fell in torrents, drumming loudly on the awnings. We were steering a course which should, in the early hours of the morning, have taken us past and clear by some seven or eight miles of the south of the island of Réunion, a French possession in the Indian Ocean. So impossible was it to see ahead that I went to the captain, in



Digitized by Google

his cabin below the bridge, to ask whether we should not sound the ship's syren. He thought this might alarm or disturb the women and children and it was not done. We held on our course, clear as we thought of land in our immediate vicinity, when the ship struck rock with a tremendous crash. It was established afterwards that that night a volcano in eruption on the island of Réunion had deflected our compasses and that we had been steaming straight towards the rocks of the island.

The great ship quivered from stem to stern and heaved on the swell. Realizing in a flash that the ship must be kept on the rocks and prevented from slipping back and sinking in deep water, I put the engines 'Full speed ahead'. Our Commander, Captain Holland, rushed on to the bridge and sang out, "Good God! what has happened?" So intense was the darkness, due to the effects of the volcanic eruption, that it was impossible to see one's hand before one's face. The ship lay partly on her side, battered by the sea, nobody knowing whether it would stay or roll completely over and sink. The rain continued to lash down, and escaping steam hissed from the boilers. The strongest nerves were tried.

Yet absolute discipline prevailed among troops and crew. Bugles sounded for the men to assemble, and they formed up on the slanting troop decks without the slightest wavering or indecision, standing steady as a rock in utter darkness until lights came, though all knew that next moment they might plunge to death.

Strangely enough, it was men of the same regiment, the King's Royal Rifles, who years before had behaved so gallantly in the *Birkenhead*, standing as though on parade until the women and children had been got into the boats, and sinking with their ship without stirring from their ranks. Now, on the *Warren Hastings*, when the word passed round, "Remember the *Birkenhead*," it acted like an inspiration.

Equally heroic were the engineers and stokers down below. Though in peril of being caught like rats in a trap, they all stuck manfully to their posts, keeping the dynamos running and making sure the ship had the lights (which had failed us temporarily) until their fires in the boilers were washed out and the inrush of water compelled them to go on deck.

Meanwhile, the urgent need was to find out how we lay in relation to the shore, and what could be done to get those aboard to safety. The sea was breaking heavily on the rocks where the ship had grounded, so the boats could not be used.

I left the bridge to get the key of the magazine and managed to grope my way down there and obtain some Verey lights. Then, accompanied by Lieutenant Dobbin, I went forward and, by the



Digitized by Google

illumination given by the lights, found that the ship's bow was above, and not far distant from, some large boulders, which we thought we might reach by lowering ourselves from the ship with ropes.

I did this, and when we had struggled up on to the rocks we lit more of our Verey lights. Then we were able to make communication between ship and shore with ropes and rig up a long canvas air-shute, down which women and children were slid to the rocks.

The ship now seemed hard on, with little immediate risk of moving, so it was agreed to postpone putting the women and children ashore until daylight and that some of the troops should go first. After about 150 men had been landed, the ship suddenly appeared to be slipping off the rocks, and she also started to heel over at such an angle that it became impossible to stand on deck without clinging to something. It now appeared as though the vessel was just about to turn turtle and sink, carrying everybody with her. Instantly orders were given for the disembarkation of the troops to cease, and for way to be made for the women and children. Those orders were obeyed without the slightest hesitation or confusion. Although some of the men who had 'fallen in' were now almost waist-deep in water, with the decks at an angle of more than forty-five degrees, they opened up a line as they stood and handed along women, children, and sick without a murmur. At one time it needed almost more than mortal courage to remain quiet on the troop decks, seeing that if the vessel went down the next time she heeled over not a man of the soldiers could have hoped to escape. Those on the main and troop decks stayed below until, as the women and children had now reached safety, they were ordered to come up to the upper, or awning, deck.

The position of the ship now seemed so serious, and a catastrophe so imminent, that orders were given for those who could swim, and wanted to do so, to discard rifles and boots and go over the side and make for the shore. I could see men walking on the side of the ship—some jumping into the water. Although only a short distance separated the starboard side of the ship from shore, the surf and the powerful backwash made conditions perilous in the extreme.

Entering the sea from the rocks, and taking lines with us to help others who might be in difficulties, Lieutenant Huddleston and I worked till we were so exhausted that we could not get back to the rocks, and had, ourselves, to be hauled ashore. I was able to save four adults and one child from the surf. One of the first people I saw sitting on the rocks was Lady Muriel Gore-Browne,



Digitized by Google

the wife of one of the K.R.R. officers. We have often met since, and laughed over the time when we were both 'on the rocks'.

One of the officer's servants, after jumping into the sea, shouted to me in Hindustani for help. But I could not go to him as I had already someone in my arms who could not swim. It seemed to me that this unfortunate man was pulled under by something—possibly a shark—as he went down and never rose again.

Although, for a time, the *Warren Hastings* continued to heel over, and seemed likely at any moment to slip back into deep water, actually, by some miracle, even after waves had begun to wash over the upper deck, the rocks continued to hold her as in a vice, and the troops were got ashore safely to the last man, still calm and cool as though on parade.

I saw many deeds of bravery. One exhausted man—whose body was being battered by a swinging door on the troop deck—could not swim and was in imminent peril of drowning, when an officer who had already been saved sprang into the surf again and reached him just in the nick of time.

One of the marvels was the very small loss of life (only two men, Indians) in what would have been a terrible tragedy if magnificent courage had not prevailed. Another, was that it seemed as if the ship had been guided by some unseen power to the one and only place on the coast where anyone could have been saved. Had the ship struck a few hundred yards away possibly no one would have been saved.

The following letter, written by Lieutenant Ernest Huddleston, so prominently associated with the disaster, to his mother supplements my own account, and I think it ought to be published here. He wrote:

We sailed from Cape Town on the 6th of January. All went well till 2.30 a.m. on the 14th. We had 1,230 souls on board, 240 composing the ship's company, servants, etc., and the rest soldiers of K.R. Rifles, and the wing of the York and Lancaster Regiment. I was asleep at 2.30 of the 14th, when I was suddenly awakened by a tremendous crash. I immediately jumped up (I was on deck), went to my cabin, and put on some clothes. The rain was pouring down in torrents, and the sea all round was lashed into foam like milk. I knew at once we had struck a rock, but whether we were twenty miles from land or on the mainland I knew not. However, the first thing I did was to go on the bridge and ask what orders. I was told to clear the boats ready for lowering. This I did, and in the meanwhile the bugle sounded and the troops were fallen in. A grander display of discipline I never saw in my life. They fell in as if on parade; not a sound was heard, not a murmur save, perhaps, the crying of a few of the women who had to be parted from their husbands and the children who clung to their mothers. It was



Digitized by Google

so dark you could not see your hand before you. I was trying to comfort these poor women, but the same time the ship was bumping frightfully. I knew she could not last long. The stokehole was full of water, and the noise of escaping steam was awful. Every minute I expected the boilers would burst, and had they done so I should not have been writing to you now. With the greatest pluck the engineers opened all the escape valves, although the flames and steam were simply hissing all round them. Not only did they let off the steam but they kept the electric light going, which went a long way in preventing a panic. Well, to continue, whilst all this was going on, we got an electric light over the bow and saw that we had struck the mainland—we could see the trees not 200 yards distant. Communication with the shore was established by two of our fellows being lowered over the bow to the rocks. Then they got rope ladders to the shore. I could not leave the ladies to get any of my own things, but helped them to pack some of their kit; in truth I had no idea that the ship would go as soon as she did, and promised myself that when my work was done I would go back to my cabin for my own things. The ship began to heel over to a most awful degree and in less time than it takes me to write she was half under water, and (luckily for me) the half on which my cabin was, was the first to go under. The order was given then to disembark. The water was rushing in, yet these brave fellows stood at their posts, indeed it is rumoured that when some of the youngest began to grow restless one or two of the older ones passed the word 'Remember the *Birkenhead*'. This (it seems) had the desired effect. If I am not mistaken it was a battalion of this very regiment (the King's Royal Rifles) that went down in her, standing at their posts. I conducted the ladies and children forward, and was here met by another officer, and my work was done—as far as looking after anyone went. I was on the point of going to my cabin when I heard the cry of 'Man overboard'. I at once lowered myself over the side and went in the direction from whence I heard the cry, but the man had been saved by a military officer. A minute or so afterwards another man was washed off, and then my work commenced. I am glad to say I saved three of the men, and was in after the fourth when I was overcome, and with some little difficulty was hauled out insensible. I do not remember any more till three hours afterwards when I found myself in a cottage being well looked after. I was very sick for a bit, and a bit bruised. I think I must have had a knock on the head being dashed against the rocks, as the surf was running very high, and the undercurrent, every time you got into the water, fairly took the breath out of you by swirling you round and round; but I was tired before I went in, only of course the fellow had to be saved—at any rate, he was. I shoved a life-buoy to him before I sank. Everyone got on shore, except two natives who were drowned. You must not think I was the only one in the water; there were three military officers who saved a man, and Windham of the *Warren Hastings* saved four, besides, some of the soldiers did excellent work. The next day the troops marched to a place called Point de Galette, everyone treating us with the greatest kindness. I could not walk—it was 22 miles,



Digitized by Google

and I was too done—my feet were cut to pieces, and I had no boots. The villagers lent me some kit. My sextant and all are gone. At any rate, I tried to do my duty. We sail from here to-morrow for Bombay, but you may get this a week sooner by my writing it here.

The story of the wreck also received attention in the following verses:

Dark was the night, 'twas creepy dark, as dark as dark could be,
When the good ship *Warren Hastings* was steaming out at sea—
Was steaming onward at full speed, without one hint of fear,
None had the least suspicion that a rock-bound isle was near.

The rain came down in torrents, and with one continuous roar
That dulled the fall of heavy waves resounding on the shore;
Around was no horizon, blended were sea and sky,
When on she pitched, and on she ploughed, though threatening rocks were nigh.

On board were full twelve hundred men, women and children too—
A regiment of soldiers, the ship's officers and crew,
All now asleep save those on watch, and he who struck the bell
As the look-out on the fo'castle cried cheerily, "All's well".

The officers upon the bridge their dreary night rounds paced,
The engineers on duty watched the engine when it raced,
As the screw with eager throbbing bounded onwards with a dash,
With a swift wild revolution—and then one tremendous crash.

A crash, a sudden shivering—"Stop her! Back her!" all in vain,
Whilst the orders of the officers were smothered by the rain.
Each sleeper started upwards, they listened with all ears,
Distracted by their sudden doubts, emotions and their fears.

"All hands on deck," the orders came, and then the words, "Fall in."
Each drowsy soldier calmly rose, calmed down by discipline,
Each man fell in, each took his post, as though upon parade,
First place for wives and children, to them the foremost aid.

The darkness still appalling, each eyeball strained in vain,
Yet not a glimpse of land was seen through darkness and the rain.
One gallant young ship's officer plunged headlong in the sea
To search for land, the rocky land, a search as wild could be.

The land he sought, the rocks he found, and with a voice of cheer
"Courage, my comrades," Windham cried, "The shore, the shore is here!"
Then ropes were thrown, a link was formed, connecting ship and land,
Down which the wives and children might be lowered hand by hand



Digitized by Google

THE AUTHOR.

Digitized by Google

PICTURE OF MY MOTHER.

Digitized by Google

Then came a lurch, the ship fell o'er, an angle forty-five,
God help the lost, the luckless men, could one remain alive?
Each soldier grasped the bulwark, whilst with sure and steady hand
They passed the wives and children on in safety to the land.

W. H. WRIGHT.

*Benares College.*

Daylight revealed the *Warren Hastings* lying on her side, battered by the sea, but salvage work was carried out. Incidentally, I climbed aboard the ship after resting for a time from the alarms and exertions of the night, and reached my cabin, as I wanted to save my parrot and my sight-book and sextant. There was something like four feet of water in my cabin and my parrot was drowned, but I recovered the sight-book and sextant. I also recovered a much-prized patent divided billiard cue, found floating near the shore, but my aluminium bicycle which I had aboard was lost. The C.O. had gone to St. Pierre, some twenty miles away. In his absence I saved all the boats on the port side, including the steam pinnace—a task in which I was helped by the French consul and volunteers from among the local fishermen. We found the only man who knew about steam engines and he managed to get the steam pinnace working. It towed all the other boats, one behind the other, to St. Pierre.

We got a diver from Mauritius, who arrived with his wife and child; unfortunately, while on the island, his wife died of fever. As I had previously studied the cases containing valuable relics of the King's Royal Rifles, naturally I had the work, together with the diver, of rescuing these boxes from the hold of the ship. The water was so thick in the hold, owing to the shifting of the cargo, that it was impossible to see anything when in diving dress, and we could only feel. Yet we were lucky enough to find the boxes. They contained the relics of the regiment's past, among them the tusks of the elephants which carried them through the gates of Delhi in the Indian Mutiny. The silver which we saved must have cost many thousands of pounds, and was of great historical value to the regiment. The divers were also lucky enough to locate and save the ship's treasure chest containing some £3,000.

One piece of salvage on which I had my eye was the ship's wheel. With the help of others I eventually managed to detach it, and afterwards presented it to the regiment. They still have it in their mess, with the officers' names engraved on it.

Two of us were left in charge of the ship with a view to saving various parts, such as the anchor chains, or possibly selling her as she was; the latter we managed to do. We were only able to realize a few francs, and for this sum the purchaser only got two



Digitized by Google

boxes of candles, as the ship slipped back into deep water, and so nothing of any value was recovered from her.

I took the opportunity to see the flow of lava from the crater of the volcano. It was one of the most extraordinary and beautiful sights I have ever witnessed. The lava, as it were, wandered slowly down the steep sides of the mountain until it finally ran into the sea, the steam at this point rising many hundreds of feet. Huge trees fell in its wake, and the intense heat caused sparks from the ignited leaves to be thrown many hundreds of feet into the sky, like fairy lights. These enormous trees were hurled down and soon enveloped in the boiling lava, and in the evening the fires and the glow could be seen for several miles around.

One act of recognition which I appreciated keenly was that I was made an honorary life member of the mess of the K.R.R. This honour was also, I believe, granted to Lieutenant E. Huddlestone. It was so rare a distinction that it gave rise in my case to an amusing incident. When I was about to enter the regimental tent at a big race-meeting, as I was entitled to do as an honorary member of the mess, the sergeant on duty at the entrance said, "Excuse me, sir, are you a member of this mess?" I answered, "Yes, I am; I am an honorary member." "Excuse me, sir," retorted the sergeant, "this regiment has no honorary member." Eventually an officer explained to the sergeant that here was one of those exceptions that prove the rule.

For the work done by the ship's officers, the Government of India mentioned many of us in their dispatches, and we also received Lloyd's Silver Medal for 'Saving Life from Shipwreck'. This is a very rare medal. Also, I was given the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society. The Earl of Elgin, then Viceroy of India, applied for the Albert Medal for me and, I think, for Lieutenant Huddlestone, but it was refused on the grounds that if any two people take part in the same action the medal cannot be given. I noticed, however, that many of these awards were given in the last war to officers for acts of gallantry on occasions when they were helped by others. Why it was refused, especially as it had been asked for by men in such a high position as the Viceroy and Admiral Sir John Hext, C.I.E., Director of the Royal Indian Marine at that time, shows that it was simply a matter of red tape and nothing else. Several of the officers were mentioned many times over for the work done in connection with this notable wreck.

It may be interesting, incidentally, to my readers to relate that Dr. Sylvester, who invented the method of resuscitation of the apparently drowned, and probably through this means saved



Digitized by Google

more lives than any other human being, died in poverty without Government recognition.

The story of the *Warren Hastings* aroused the admiration not only of the people of our own country but of those of all nations throughout the world. It showed how discipline will enable men to withstand, with calmness and courage, conditions which would produce chaos and terror among the undisciplined. The late German Kaiser was particularly interested, and it is said that he gave orders in 1914 that the account of the heroism and devotion to duty of the English troops on this occasion was to be read to the German Army to show them what the word 'discipline' meant to a soldier.

How were the soldiers who lost their possessions in this epic of the sea compensated? I take this quotation from a contemporary article in the Press, headed

## "HEROES GO CHEAP"

We are no grievance mongers. We hate to grumble at anything or anybody, even the War Office, and it therefore should be fully understood that nothing of what follows is intended in any way to cast the least reflection upon the methods or doings of that great organization. We desire, in the most appreciative spirit, to state the facts which show for themselves how rigidly the War Office people adhere to their traditional principles of Army administration; how conscientiously they follow the narrow tape-marked path of precedent, and how nobly they refuse to regard the highest qualities of heroism on the part of Thomas Atkins as anything more than the ordinary duties of his employment due from him in return for his keep and his wages. It will not have been forgotten that at 2 o'clock in the morning of January the 14th last, the Indian Transport *Warren Hastings*, full of troops, was wrecked off the Island of Réunion and that of the 1,246 souls on board, only two were lost. That bald statement is sufficient to recall to the readers of the *Daily Mail* one of the most splendid examples of perfect bravery and perfect discipline to be found in the glorious annals of the British Army. Not only readers of the *Daily Mail*, but all English-speaking people and, indeed, all the civilized people of the Earth, will remember the story, which will be handed on.

A golden page of history to which future generations will point as a shining example of that combination of discipline and courage in the face of death that we call heroism, and when, hundreds of years hence, the story is told, the rewards distributed by the War Office will be pointed to as showing that in the glorious Victorian era, heroism in the British Army was so common a quality that it was not thought worth rewarding. It is not necessary to tell the story of the loss of the *Warren Hastings*; the world rang with it at the time, men of every race heard it with pride of their humanity, but at home and in Canada, in Australia,



Digitized by Google

in Africa and in every corner of the Earth where the British Flag flies every bosom swelled again with pride of the British blood . . . by skill of the Commander and the perfect discipline of the men a great disaster was averted and 1,244 lives were saved, but the 1,244 brought nothing ashore but their lives and the scanty clothing they stood up in. All their belongings were lost.

In estimating and apportioning the compensation to be made, the War Office has acted up to its *finest traditions*. It has taken six months over the job, for, of course, it would never have done to show any haste or impulsiveness, lest soldiers might get the idea that they are persons of consequence and entitled to consideration. So the War Office has properly kept the men waiting for half a year. But it is in estimating the amount of the compensation that Pall Mall has shone most nobly. It would never do, of course, to encourage private soldiers to have any property, or, having it, to go wandering round the world losing it in shipwrecks. Public opinion and the exceptional circumstances demanded that some compensation should be given, but the War Office has carefully put it as low as possible. The rank and file are to be compensated for the loss of their little alls, their private property, at the rate of 10s. per man! 10s. for each hero with which to set himself up afresh in the world.

It is impossible to believe that soldiers like Sir Evelyn Wood and Sir Redvers Buller have drawn up this precious scale of compensation. . . . But the subordinate officials know how necessary it is that the soldier should not be pampered and taught to expect anything in the nature of reward for bravery and discipline, and so heroism, plus the worldly belongings of heroes, work out at

TEN SHILLINGS APIECE

or two for a sovereign by taking a quantity. Of course, the point of the whole thing is that the ten-shilling Tommy has no claim from the War Office point of view. He has no right to have private property; red tape does not recognize that he has any, and if he loses it incidentally to behaving like a hero, why, that is his look-out. The War Office has something else to do than to bother about his beggarly belongings.

The inevitable finale was that a certain number of the executive branch, including myself, were court-martialled at Bombay, and cross-examined as to the loss of one of Her Majesty's ships. It was lucky for me that I had regained my sight-book, showing our position from the time we left the Cape up to the time of the disaster. Everything was inquired into, including the weather before we started and the fact that the harbourmaster at Cape Town had warned us not to sail. I am not surprised that he did, as the storm was so bad that, when returning from Cape Town to the ship, I had to turn round and practically walk backwards to protect my face against the small stones which were thrown up and lashed my face like a whip. As the officer on the bridge at the time of



Digitized by Google

the wreck, I was doubly cross-questioned. It was rather embarrassing to have one's sword taken and placed on the table, pointed outwards, while being subjected to this severe ordeal. There is no doubt that had the sounding of the syren been allowed, we should have heard the echo from the mountains and it might have been the means of saving the ship.

The court found us 'not guilty' and exonerated all, especially praising the work we did in saving lives. The disaster was put down to an 'act of God', caused by the deflection of the compass, a fact which was confirmed in the log book of a coasting vessel found by the French consul and myself after the various inquiries had been made.

## CHAPTER IV

### FIGHTING THE PLAGUE AT BOMBAY

BOMBAY, WHEN I WAS THERE AFTER THE WRECK OF THE *Warren Hastings*, was afflicted by the first terrible bubonic plague. People were fleeing the city in fear. Most of the servants of the Bombay Yacht Club had gone.

General Sir William Gatacre (nicknamed 'Backacher' for the way he worked and made others work), who was President of the Bombay Plague Committee, appealed publicly, but without much success, for help in combating the plague. Shipwrecked and unemployed as I was, I offered my services, which were accepted, and I was seconded, with extra remuneration, from my own Service, the Royal Indian Marine, and appointed a secretary on the Plague Commission. My task was to look after existing hospitals and to build and equip temporary ones on the outskirts of the city. The plague, though it struck down natives wholesale, did not affect Europeans; indeed, I heard of the death of only one European, a British soldier, during the outbreak. The reason was that while Europeans were shod, natives went barefoot, and were much more liable to the attacks of the rat-flea which medical science soon discovered to be the source of the disease.

Our work was not only exhausting, but most nauseating. Every day, and almost every hour, hundreds of plague-stricken natives were brought into the hospitals at one entrance, only to be taken out dead at the other. Doctors and matrons were at their wits' ends; specialists came from all over the world to study the new epidemic. I cabled for young nurses from England, and those who arrived had had very little training.



Digitized by Google

One of these young nurses was told by the doctor in charge of the hospital that a certain patient who, of course, was not suffering from the plague, was to be kept awake at all costs. When I asked her in the morning whether she had succeeded, she said, "Yes; he never went to sleep at all. I told him that the last patient that lay in that bed died from the same illness that he had"!

Among my many duties I had to take most of the journalists and medical men, who came from all parts, round the hospitals. One was so overwhelmed by what he saw that he said nothing on earth would make him visit another hospital or remain a day longer than necessary in India. He soon left for home.

Our problem was not only to cure the stricken and prevent the spread of the disease, but to dispose of the large numbers of dead. When all ordinary methods had failed, we collected the bodies, and, irrespective of class, age, sex or sect, burned them with paraffin *en masse* on piles of wood and shavings. One of my tasks, with my helpers, was to visit native dwellings to turn out rubbish and burn it in the streets. In one house I found a woman squatting in the corner of a room. I spoke to her in her own lingo, but she did not answer. I found she was stiff and dead!

We marked all houses where there was plague with a ring on the outside walls; where death had taken place a cross was marked inside a circle. Gradually, by taking every possible precaution, we began to cope with the appalling disease, and the number of cases decreased.

The exhaustion and nature of this work affected my health, especially as I had so recently been shipwrecked, and I suffered from fever, caused by exposure and by cuts from the rocks which had poisoned my legs and feet. I developed a type of malaria which puzzled the doctors. It came on in sudden attacks, rendering me prostrate. Eventually I had to be sent home by doctor's orders, and, after two years of sickness, I was pensioned from the Service.

The official who succeeded me in my Bombay plague work met with a tragic fate. In our mass burnings of the vast numbers of dead it was inevitable that native caste distinctions should be infringed. This exposed those who had to carry out this terrible work—should the infringement become known—to grave risk from religious fanatics. We burned the heaps of bodies secretly behind the walls of a large enclosure, and I reported this action to Sir William Gatacre, my chief, but to no one else. My successor had been warned of the need for preserving absolute secrecy, but somehow news of what was taking place leaked out and this officer was stabbed in the back by a religious fanatic who jumped on his dog-cart in the dark.

General Gatacre, in his reports, had given me great credit



Digitized by Google

for what I had done and invited me to take over another huge area in the Ratnagherri district, south of Bombay, where the plague was rapidly spreading; he offered me sole control and a ship on which I could live and work. But, ill with fever, I spent most of my time in bed at the General's house at Malabar Hill, Bombay, longing to work but unable to do so, until I was sent home in the troopship *Clive*. General Gatacre received the thanks of the Government of India and of the Government of Bombay for his services.

## CHAPTER V

### MY WORK AS AN INSPECTOR IN THE LIFEBOAT SERVICE

THE NEXT PHASE OF MY EXPERIENCE WAS AS AN INSPECTOR OF lifeboats. I was appointed to this position after the Board of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution had examined me as to my qualifications, but mainly, I feel sure, because my chief in the Indian Marine, Admiral Sir John Hext, C.I.E., had supported my candidature in a letter which I now have and value very much. He was kind enough to write that my work at the wreck of the *Warren Hastings* was 'a credit to the whole service'.

First, I accompanied another lifeboat inspector on practice launches of lifeboats on the English coast. I saw how boats were overhauled to make sure no water was left in the many airtight compartments, and that all equipment, such as Verey lights, cork lifebelts, sails, launching gear, and the carriage for returning the boats were in working order. Later, I was placed in charge of the Irish lifeboat district, which included the Isle of Man, Cheshire, and Lancashire, where there were fifty-six boats. These did immense service in aiding ships in distress and rescuing life and property. Crews were drawn from local fishermen, each controlled by a coxswain. There were local committees consisting of leading people in each district, and no money was spared to keep the boats in a high state of efficiency. Frequent exercises took place, the crews being summoned by rocket (not by maroons, as now). Women as well as men helped in the launchings.

Sites for lifeboat houses are chosen with careful regard to prevailing wind and weather, and the most probable position of wrecks, so that as far as possible the lifeboat may have the wind with her when approaching a ship.

Stations were connected by telegraph, but it was quite common



Digitized by Google

in my time for messages to have to go through some inland town in order to reach an adjoining station which might be only a few miles away. At night this made it very difficult, sometimes, to call another station or even the adjoining station. I went to a certain telegraph office, which would not answer my call, and found that the old lady in charge of the post office had stuck part of her dress in the apparatus to stop the bell ringing!

In lifeboat exercises I took the view that the boat should be tried in all weathers and under all circumstances, under the worst, not the best, conditions. But once I had to admit there could be exceptions to such a rule. I had arranged an exercise, and when I arrived the coxswain advised me that the weather was too bad to launch the boat. This made me only the more keen that the exercise should go on. I soon had cause to repent of my decision. Sea and wind got hold of the boat. The gale was terrific, and even with the help of a small amount of sail she became unmanageable. After a long fight with the waves we were driven on the rocks several hundred yards from the shore.

The crew jumped clear by my orders, and when we were all safely off I had the distress signal sounded to summon helpers to rescue the boat. Quite a hundred turned up, and with huge stones we made a roadway over which the boat was hauled a foot at a time above high-water mark. In practices I used to suggest that a man should jump overboard to test the lifebelts and ascertain how long the crew would take, under the coxswain's guidance, in rescuing a man overboard. In summer time the idea was well received, and some crews handled the boat well in these experiments.

In Ireland I made the acquaintance of an unusual personality. I was asked by the committee to try to get permission from Lord Antrim to have a lifeboat house erected on the front at Portrush, an application which had been already refused on the ground that a boathouse on the parade of this holiday place would spoil the amenities. I found Lord Antrim very pleasant. He asked me, in his usual language, "Why the devil I came to him, and who sent me." I said, "I came to see you, sir, because I thought you were the 'fountain-head'." He shouted, "Yes, I am the b——y fountain-head, and I wish others would realize that fact. Well, I will tell my secretary to let you have the site, and what do you wish to pay for it?" I said, "A nominal fee of one shilling per annum," to which he willingly consented.

I liked Lord Antrim, who was devoted to birds and other wild life, and I think the reason he granted me my request was because he had observed that I, too, was fond of animals. He had noticed while playing golf with me that I had gone to look at a lesser



Digitized by Google

shrewmouse running across the grass. He told me he had sold most of his big library to buy books on birds. Here is a characteristic story of him. I asked if there were any salmon in his stream. He said, "Yes, but the bally chaps round here poach them. Late one evening I hid on the bank of the river, and to my surprise I saw my own butler coming quietly along. When he was bending over the river to snare a fish, I crept up and gave him a devil of a kick behind, and over he went into the water." The same butler was handing a dish to me at lunch at the time the story was being told, and he was shaking all over!

I recall another occasion when, during coffee after lunch, Lord Antrim saw someone walking across a small tree plantation. He opened the window and shouted at the man, half a mile away, in the most awful language, asking what the —— he meant by being there, tramping down newly planted trees. Lord Antrim drove his cattle to market himself, and woe betide the last animal if he got near it, as he used to carry a pretty thick stick. I looked upon him as an exceptional character among the many people I have met. I liked him very much, and we were good friends.

I admit that my career in the lifeboat service was not without troubles, and a certain friction which arose caused me to abandon it. I had found many things wrong with a lifeboat which I inspected at Hoylake on the Mersey, especially the boiler, and this I reported to headquarters. An engineer who was sent down reported that the boiler was good enough for the work it had to do. I was asked if I would withdraw my report, and I refused. There was a big meeting of shipowners at Liverpool at which I was asked to reconsider my decision to resign. A naval officer in this meeting declared that it was useless to appoint an inspector if his advice were not accepted. Sir Edward Birkbeck, chairman of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, sent for me and asked me to reconsider the report which I had made, but this I preferred not to do. Shortly after my retirement it was reported that the boat's boiler had blown up, some of the crew being injured.

Our lifeboat service is, I think, unique in the world; its work is hard and strenuous, both for officers and men. It is recorded that the inspector, named Pullen, who took my place died from exposure after taking the boat out. The splendid men who man these boats show the spirit of the men of our great sea race of the past, which I call 'the soul of an island race'. The same applies to the Irish, the only difference being that I found them difficult for me, in an official capacity, to work with. This spirit shows itself to-day in the heroism and wonderful service of the whole of our fighting forces, minesweepers, Merchant Navy, and others,



Digitized by Google

and, to my mind, especially the Air Force; in fact, in all who risk their lives in anything they undertake show the same spirit of courage and adventure as their forefathers.

## CHAPTER VI

### MY KING'S MESSENGER DAYS

IT WAS MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO ACT FOR EIGHT YEARS, from 1901, as Foreign Messenger to Queen Victoria and (for the greater part of that period) to King Edward VII. Romance surrounds the King's Messenger. The silver greyhound badge of the Foreign Office is a talisman that opens the way for him wherever he goes on land or sea. I was one of eight messengers, each, when his turn of duty came, holding himself ready to travel to foreign capitals or wherever the dispatches with which he was entrusted had to be delivered.

If the King's Messenger journeys are invested with a sense of drama, which novelists have exploited to the full, they can often be weary and fatiguing. In Russia I was once snowed up for a long time in a train during a severe blizzard.

I had a special compartment to myself on the trains and a special cabin on the boats, and it was my duty not to lose sight of my dispatches for a moment. One which I carried from St. Petersburg to London was the last Anglo-Russian Treaty, signed by the Tsar. With such a document in his keeping the messenger feels a heavy sense of responsibility, and it is a great relief to hand it over safe and sound at the Foreign Office or Embassy.

We read of desperadoes who try to rob King's Messengers and of beautiful female spies using wiles to extract secret documents. One of my experiences might have furnished an ingenious novelist with a plot. I was travelling by night in Spain on a long-distance train, carrying dispatches to Seville from London. It was Easter week and the train was crowded; but, as usual, I had a compartment to myself. The *chef-de-gare* came to me, apologetic, explaining that he was unable to find accommodation for a lady who had boarded the train at the last stop and asking my permission to let her travel in my compartment. He also explained that the lady would leave the train at a certain station in the early hours of the morning. This was not to the liking of a King's Messenger carrying important documents, but the man was persistent, and I agreed to allow the lady to enter. It was quite in the vein of melo-



Digitized by Google

drama that she was extremely attractive, beautifully dressed, with expensive furs, and delicately perfumed, evidently 'a woman of the world'. The train continued to rumble through the night across Spain and there we were alone together, King's Messenger and mysterious lady, she talking vivaciously.

Time went on and I began to suspect she wanted to tire me out so that I might drop off to sleep. Presently I said that with her permission I would rest, and she said she would do the same. I added that although I usually stretched myself out to rest on long night journeys I never by any chance went to sleep (which was untrue). I lay down, but did not close my eyes. The train stopped, and the lady got out at a different station from the one to which she had said she was travelling. She did not even say 'Good night' or 'Good-bye'. I confess I felt relieved. It may have been a mere incident in long-distance travel, and yet I wondered.

Some of my most pleasant trips, as King's Messenger, were those I took abroad with dispatches for King Edward VII—sometimes to Marienbad, which he frequently visited, sometimes to Biarritz, occasionally to the Royal yacht cruising in the Mediterranean. King Edward was an extraordinarily well-informed man of the world. He was kind and considerate to all around him, and seemed specially solicitous for the comfort of his messengers. Like many of the Royal Family, he had an exceptional memory for faces and data. When he was staying at the Hotel Weimar, Marienbad, as Duke of Lancaster, I took out to him, among other things, a picked consignment of grouse, which had been shot on the opening day of the season. He was delighted with this addition to the menu, and invited me to join him at lunch. Afterwards he gave me a very good cigar.

On another occasion I was ordered to take dispatches to His Majesty *via* Brindisi, where I was told a destroyer would be waiting to convey me to the island of Corfu; but I received other orders from a certain British Ambassador in Italy to proceed to Naples, which I did. On arrival there I found the place deserted and covered with lava dust from Vesuvius. I proceeded to the docks and found the destroyer, which had orders to take me with all dispatch to His Majesty at Corfu. The commander was much worried, as he had insufficient coal for the trip, but we solved that difficulty by taking what we wanted from the wharf and leaving a 'chit' explaining what we had done, giving the ship's name, etc.

On arrival, I took His Majesty his correspondence and he asked me why I had been delayed. When I told him I had been deflected from my course by a certain Ambassador, the King was furious and gave orders there and then that his messengers were not to be interfered with. Then he seemed sorry that he had



Digitized by Google

been cross, and gave me his best suite of rooms on the yacht. Afterwards he sent me on Beatty's flagship, where I was very well looked after. The only thing I didn't like was the way the morning prayers were read by Beatty in what I thought a flippant and highbrow tone. Corfu was most beautiful, and everyone seemed to be an artist. The Kaiser had a wonderful villa there, which I visited.

Another time, when I had taken dispatches to him at Marienbad, King Edward sent a message asking whether I would like to go out for a drive in the Royal car, which he was not wanting at the time. Naturally, I said I would. That motor trip had one amusing incident. The King had just arrived, and large crowds lingered in the streets, hoping to see him. When the people saw the car coming along they crowded to the kerb. I am afraid they were bitterly disappointed to see me instead.

King Edward was extremely versatile. When I was dining with him one night at Marienbad the conversation turned on the number of medicinal springs in that neighbourhood. Some people gave one figure, some another; then the King gave his opinion. The hotel manager was called and interrogated, and it was found that the King's estimate was exactly right. His chief attendant told me he had become a 'walking encyclopædia' just through listening to His Majesty's conversation.

I was the first person to carry the King's despatches in a motor-car. Lord Montagu, in his paper, *Car Illustrated*, wrote:

'In the King's name!' has been the cry of the Royal *legati* for centuries as they hurried by chariot or coach, on foot or horseback. Many as have been the methods of the messengers in carrying dispatches of the State, it was not until last week that the Foreign Office mail was ever carried by motor-car. The distinction of being the first King's Messenger to carry such dispatches *en automobile* has been gained by Lieutenant W. G. Windham, late Royal Indian Marine, who utilized his 9 h.p. Darracq 'in the King's name' between Charing Cross Station and Whitehall.

Lieut. Windham, the King's Foreign Messenger, carried the Foreign Office dispatches for Brussels, Berlin, Darmstadt, Copenhagen, and intermediate stations. These included letters from His Majesty to the Queen, who was at Copenhagen. The same route was taken for the return journey, and this time the lieutenant carried letters from Her Majesty to the King. He arrived at Charing Cross Station a few minutes before six o'clock, and there his motor-car was waiting in readiness. The porter at the Foreign Office was probably astounded at the sight of the King's Messenger driving a motor-car—an outrage to the custom of centuries!

As His Majesty himself is such a keen automobilist, this seems a fitting innovation and one which he will undoubtedly look upon with



Digitized by Google

favour. The time will come when many others of the officials of the Royal household will adopt the ubiquitous motor for the more rapid execution of their duties. One can imagine the shade of a King's Messenger of Chaucer's days, booted, spurred, armed, and armoured, gazing with ghostly eyes, round with wonder, upon Lieutenant Windham driving his Darracq within the confines of historic Whitehall. Truly a change has come o'er the spirit of our dream!

Fate has played me odd tricks in my time. Just before the disaster to the Channel steamer *Berlin* I had been at Cairo. Friends had over-persuaded me to attend a fancy dress ball there, and I was a day late in reaching the Foreign Office to take my turn on duty as Foreign Service Messenger. Passing through Turin on my way to London I caught sight of news placards with the words, '*Berlin* Wrecked, King's Messenger Drowned'. I read in the paper that a special messenger, not a King's Foreign Service Messenger, had been summoned to carry dispatches, and that this gentleman, Mr. Herbert, had taken my place on the ill-fated *Berlin*. In a heavy sea the vessel had tried to enter the Hook of Holland, but had been driven against a breakwater and practically broken in two. Poor Herbert's body was washed ashore, and his dispatches—which I should have been carrying if I had not overstayed my leave—were found floating in the wreckage.

I had a letter from the Chief Clerk of the Foreign Office, asking me why on such-and-such a date I was absent from duty. My answer was: 'In answer to your letter of so-and-so, my reply is—"FATE". I have the honour to be, Sir, etc.'

During my service in the Foreign Office I met nearly all the crowned heads of Europe, and when later I inaugurated the aerial post I had letters from most of them, thanking me for sending a souvenir of this event. I have retained these documents and value them enormously, even the one sent me by the late Kaiser.

On one occasion, Dame Ethel Smyth, the well-known composer, shared my compartment on her way to Berlin, and later we met at the British Embassy. The Kaiser honoured her by coming to hear her play. Her fingers raced over the keys, bringing out all that a piano is capable of. When she had finished her performance amid great applause, the Kaiser turned to her and said, "Would you kindly play something simple to me? I should like 'The Wearing of the Green'." She seemed surprised at the request, but naturally gratified the Royal wish.

During my many travels at this time I saved the life of the son of the American Ambassador, Mr. Leisham, at Constantinople. Walking along the banks of the Bosphorus one evening, a small yacht attracted my attention. I watched her being brought to anchor, but no sooner had this been done than the mainsail boom



Digitized by Google

swung over and knocked Mr. Leisham into the water. Knowing the danger of these waters, I hurriedly took off my shoes and jumped in, and, with a hard struggle, swam out to Mr. Leisham, who was unconscious, although he could swim a little. With some difficulty I dragged him to the shore. For this I was offered the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, but, as I already had one for my work on the wreck of the *Warren Hastings*, I asked for a bronze medal, and this was presented to me at the Foreign Office.

During my term of service I met a very great friend of my father, Mr. Hatton-Turnor, who was in the Rifle Brigade with him, and wrote a book using the motto of the Lindsay family, *Astra Castra*. It contained accounts of the first hundred years of balloon ascents, beautifully illustrated from prints collected by him from all over the world. He presented me with one of these books for myself, and asked me to take one to His Majesty the Tsar of Russia, which I did. I received a letter from General Kavanko, head of the Balloon Park in St. Petersburg, thanking me for the book, and expressing the Tsar's hope that he would be able to thank me personally for the presentation.

General Kavanko asked me to lunch, and I was very interested in the work being done with balloons. I took many photographs, unknown to General Kavanko, by using a small camera concealed behind my coat, through one of the buttonholes. Later, I sent these to the War Office.

I was very surprised, on entering the General's study, by his invitation to see the originals of the prints already referred to hanging on the walls. I asked him where he had obtained these, and he said he bought them from the caretaker of a bank in London. I told this to Mr. Hatton-Turnor, who said that he had deposited them in his bank, and that when he asked for them the bank officials said they had no recollection of what became of them.

While in St. Petersburg I was invited to go to the opening of the Duma. The chamber in which it met was rather like the House of Commons without the galleries. The seating was circular and on the wall, facing the centre, there hung a huge portrait of the Tsar. I heard some speeches which were delivered from a pulpit-like rostrum situated near this picture. When a speech had lasted a quarter of an hour a large gong was sounded, drowning the speaker's voice, and I reflected that some such contrivance might have been useful in our House of Commons. I was given a passport, as a King's Messenger, signed by the Tsar, permitting me to travel all over Russia, and I still have it to-day among my souvenirs. I visited Russia and Turkey in my official capacity between forty and fifty times.



Digitized by Google

I served with King Edward until he died. When I heard that he had passed away I sat down and wrote my resignation: I had no desire to serve longer. No words of mine could convey my admiration and regard for King Edward. In answer to a message which I sent, I received from Princess Victoria, whom I had met and who was very gracious to me, this acknowledgment:

*Buckingham Palace.*

*Captain Windham, Royal Automobile Club,* 119 *Piccadilly.*
*My sincere thanks for your kind sympathy in our deep grief.*

*Victoria.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DAWN OF THE 'HORSELESS AGE'

I BECAME ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF MOTORING WHEN THE MOTOR-car was an innovation and a wonder, crude as the earliest designs may seem to us to-day. A journey of any great length by motor was in those days an adventure and even something of a sensation. Many were the trials of the pioneers. A horse-cab driver shouted at me when I was driving one of the first motor-cars I owned, "Take that thing off the road! It smells like a cat and it barks like a dog!" Boys employed to sweep streets threw dirt at us, and country-folk swore when they saw us. The Orkneys and Shetlands were scandalized when the late Mr. Wason, M.P. brought a car to their islands. When I stopped my car at the well-known Huts Hotel at Wisley the late manager asked me, very politely, to remove it, since it upset the horses and the drivers could not drink their beer!

The first carriage-motor was invented and patented in 1880 by Mr. Lawson, who also invented the first safety-cycle in Coventry, where he fitted out the large Fairfield Works in Crow Lane. In conjunction with Mr. Hughes, the locomotive manufacturer of Loughborough, he also invented the first motive-power tricycle. This tricycle was driven by an oil motor, the gas generator being supplementary, since the motor itself was powerful enough to propel the vehicle on level ground. This was the first motor-cycle driven by an oil engine in this country. The Act of Parliament prevented this machine being used on the roads, but did not prevent Mr. Lawson taking out his patent in 1880. With the latest improvements, mechanically propelled cars were slowly taking a firm hold.



Digitized by Google

It was said "The horseless carriage will revolutionize the present noisy thoroughfare, and silent streets will be the rule." (Modern road traffic, particularly in our great cities, is a commentary on this prediction.) The motor-car is never ill, cannot bolt, does not require a rest, will not slip down, cannot become broken-kneed, and anyone can, with a few hours' explanation of the simple mechanism, become his own engineer."

On 1st May, 1896, at an 'inaugural banquet' of the Motor Car Club, held at the Imperial Institute, the chairman, Mr. H. J. Lawson, said of the 'horseless carriage' industry: "We hear the cries and groans of those who tell us there will be no manure to fertilize the fields, and of others who weep and cry because they say the cats will have no feed for lack of horses. But most of this opposition proceeds from the so-called friends of the horse. The friends of the horse blindfold him with blinkers, strap him up in shafts, gag him with iron bits and bearing reins, and sit over him with whips, putting him under the lash as a reward for his hard work. I can imagine the horse saying, 'If ye are my friends, thank God you are not my relations.' On the other hand, the horseless carriage has met with a far more cordial reception than, perhaps, any other great modern improvement."

My first engine-driven vehicle was what was known as a 'de Dion' tricycle. My advertisement for someone to teach me to drive it was answered by no other than Mr. Perry, now Lord Perry, head of the great Ford Works at Dagenham. He gave me the needful lessons in Battersea Park before an audience of onlookers. On this tricycle I took part unofficially in what was known as the first 'emancipation run'—to celebrate the end of the regulation requiring a man with a red flag to walk in front of a motor-car in the public roadway—on 14th November, 1896, from London to Brighton.

My tricycle was 'temperamental'. Sometimes it was hard to start, and when it did start some mechanical trouble would soon stop it. The machine was on its best behaviour when I left the rendezvous, the Metropole Hotel, London, behind the others taking part in the run, and I caught up with them at Reigate, where we all had lunch. When we were due to restart, my tricycle refused to go, and I pushed it into a side street to wrestle with it away from public gaze. It did pick up, however, and I set off for Brighton. We reached the goal after further halts and various adventures. Here was a new page in transport: the 'horseless age' had dawned. Enthusiastic crowds lined the routes.

The public attitude in another way to the motor vehicle at this time was shown during my journey on the same temperamental tricycle from London to Scotland. A newspaper got to



Digitized by Google

DRAWING BY LANDSEER OF MY MOTHER IN HER CRADLE.

Digitized by Google

S.S. 'SOBRAON' RUNNING BEFORE THE WIND.

Digitized by Google

hear of my journey and sent a reporter to follow me on a bicycle. It was the hare and the tortoise. I started off at great speed, but soon I was pulled up by engine trouble and the cyclist overtook me. I struggled on for days, but abandoned my enterprise and wheeled the tricycle into a railway station at Berwick-on-Tweed to be sent on by train. The booking clerk had never seen such a vehicle before and he was puzzled how to book it. At last he said, "I'll book it as a perambulator," and under that description my tricycle went across the Border.

I got it again at Elgin, where it attracted great interest, since it was probably the first seen in that town. Many people stood round it in the square and a policeman asked me to move it on as I was obstructing the traffic. My answer was, "I cannot control the crowd; that is your job. If you want the cycle to be moved why not try pushing it?" I have another recollection of Elgin. One of my earliest cars, a Darracq, was described, or denounced, from the pulpit by a clergyman in the Duffus Church, near that town, as 'that white devil'.

I remember another example of the distrust widely felt for the motor and the motor pioneer. I attended an exhibition at the Imperial Institute, where a single car was shown. The inventor offered to drive me on to the platform, but my friends persuaded me, against my own wish, to refuse the offer, although the inventor had already demonstrated that the car would go up the sloping boards on to the platform.

The pioneer had all sorts of mechanical difficulties. If he tried night-driving he had to rely upon paraffin side-lamps, and acetylene headlights. Most of them gave bad light, and all were liable to fail when most needed. The early cars often skidded on wet or greasy roads and sometimes turned completely round. But we were not only pioneers but enthusiasts, and nothing could daunt us.

I started driving a car about the year 1898, when cars were fitted with tube-ignition at the side of the cylinder and the methylated spirit (of which about two teaspoonfuls were held in a type of cup) had to be lit with a match before the petrol was turned on and the car would start. The brass-lined brakes only held when the car went forward, and sprags were fitted to prevent it going backwards. After this dry batteries were used, and trembler-blades for the ignition and suction valves preceded the mechanically operated valve. One car I owned was fitted with pneumatic tyres, but tubeless. It was not uncommon to get two or three punctures a day, since many horses were on the road and many nails shed.

The chief cause of our breakdowns was that the sparking plug would not spark owing to the failure of the trembler-blade to function. The bodies of the cars were painted with vertical broad



Digitized by Google

lines and were high behind to keep off the dust, the roads not being macadamed. All cars were fitted with chain drive before the live axle was introduced. Number plates or licences were not known till January, 1904.

I became myself a builder of motor-cars, my motor works being situated just outside Clapham Junction station. There I built hundreds of cars fitted with the patent 'Windham detachable body', which I sent to all parts of the world. I had designed and patented the idea of cutting away a portion of the door of the closed body to allow the door to be fitted over the wing. About the year 1911 I built a car for His Highness the Maharajah of Sirohi, India, which was fitted with a Daimler engine and had three detachable and interchangeable bodies—one closed, one a shooting brake, the third a tourer body. In 1922 my brother, the late Lieut.-Colonel Windham, saw this car being driven in Delhi in the procession following the Prince of Wales. He told me that the Maharajah liked the car very much and that it went splendidly, although it certainly looked 'awfully out of date'. The comment of another onlooker was that the car looked as if it had come out of the Lord Mayor's show!

The motor journey made by Prince Borghese from Pekin to Paris was a great event in the history of mechanized transport. I was the only Englishman who went to meet the Prince on his arrival at St. Petersburg (the Leningrad of to-day), and I wrote for one of the motoring papers a description of his arrival there and something about the vicissitudes of the motorist in Russia of that day. My journey to St. Petersburg was in some parts a motorist's purgatory. I think the great impression made in the world of the time by the Prince's journey will be best conveyed if I set down my record of it exactly as it was first published:

## PRINCE BORGHESE'S RIDE FROM PEKIN TO PARIS

Being the only Englishman who went out to meet Prince Borghese on his arrival at Petersburg, I have thought it might prove interesting to give a brief description of his magnificent reception in St. Petersburg and also to add a few remarks as to motor matters generally in that country.

Arriving in this town on Saturday morning, the 27th August, 1907, I ascertained that the first motorist expected was Prince Borghese in his 40 h.p. Itala, and that he was due at Petersburg on the following Monday. However, owing to his enthusiastic reception in Moscow, he did not leave that city till 6.30 on the following Wednesday morning. As soon as the news spread through Petersburg that the car had left Moscow, arrangements were made by the Automobile Club of Russia for as many of its members as possible to go out in their cars to welcome him, and escort him back into Petersburg.



Digitized by Google

A rendezvous was made outside the magnificent building of the Cathedral of St. Isaac. So at 10 a.m. I wended my way there, and found a few motors, with their occupants, already lined up ready for the start. I had the honour of being asked to accompany Mr. Kritch in his 14 h.p. Buick car, he being appointed to lead the way, flying a large pennant as leader. Shortly before our departure at 10.30 a.m. a large English-made omnibus made its appearance, causing some little curiosity and sensation. Apparently it had been hired by the Italian community of Petersburg to convey them part of the way to welcome the representative of their country, who had accomplished such a wonderful feat.

Some time after our procession had started, a large two-seater Gobron-Brillié came rushing along past the line, and I ascertained that it had kindly been sent out by Mr. N.—— (head of some enormous ironworks, and also of the Baku oil mines), and that it was to be placed at my disposal. But as I was already comfortably situated I declined the car with thanks, and it returned to Petersburg. The journey out was an eye-opener to me of what is expected of a car in Russia, and also of what these cars must have gone through on such a journey as that from Pekin. Owing to a mistake we made in the route, we crossed over a road which I have never seen the equal of in my travels in all parts of the world, not even in the wildest parts of Turkey or Arabia. Enormous holes and ravines pass through the road, loose rocks weighing anything from 5 to 50 lbs. and, added to this the mud in most places a foot thick. Our cars skidded in all directions, and one, as the result of a skid, nearly came to grief by heading for a deep ditch which had water in it.

On reaching a village about twenty versts out of Petersburg, called Poulkovo, or the observation station, my friend blew his trumpet to stop the leading cars, in order that those who were behind should have time to assemble, after which the lot (some eight or ten cars) should get together to meet the Prince, who was now expected some eight versts farther out. But before this manœuvre could be carried out, lo and behold, the Itala car was suddenly seen to appear round a bend of the hill, and before any of us could realize the fact, Prince Borghese was in our midst. Immediately a loud hurrah went up, and he was surrounded by his friends, who presented him with a large bouquet of flowers. I was lucky through being in the leading car to take the first photograph.

After a lot of handshaking and personal congratulation the various cars were ordered to proceed to Tsarskoe-Selo, where several people had gone out by train to meet him. Being ahead of his time, the Prince had to retrace his path some seven or eight versts. While waiting in this village, I carefully examined the Prince's famous car, and was greatly surprised at the excellent condition it was in. There was not a single thing, as far as I could see, which was the worse for its journey from Pekin, and, considering the awful country through which it must have travelled, this was truly wonderful.

People in England cannot imagine the kind of roads that have to



Digitized by Google

be negotiated in Russia, and it is no wonder that most of the motors imported into that country are quite inefficient for the work expected of them.

Prince Borghese told me he had only fitted his second pair of tyres on his front wheels, and his fourth pair on the back. They were made by Perelli, square-treaded without studs, and, judging by the look of them, they were about 920 × 120 on all four wheels. He carried four spare ones, two of which had not yet been opened out, and were still in their waterproof wrapping as supplied by the makers. The lamps were acetylene, made by Corello, Turin. The bonnet had the words 'Pechino' (Pekin) on one side and 'Parigi' (Paris) on the other, and I could not detect the slightest thing wrong in the working of the car, except that the radiator was a bit hot; and no wonder, as it was not fitted with wings, and mud covered the lowest part of the radiator, so preventing circulation. In other parts the mud was inches thick. Apparently there were no number plates, and I wondered to myself what men like Police-Sergeant Jarrott, of Witney fame (as narrated elsewhere), who was responsible for trapping hundreds of motorists on the London to Guildford Road, would have said had they been on duty.

I noticed on Prince Borghese's car that the indiarubber shock-absorbers had been roughly tied on, showing one the necessity of having a well-sprung car for bad roads.

My companion told me he had supplied the gasoline used throughout the journey. He was the owner of several cars in St. Petersburg, and had, by the way, taken up the agency of my patent detachable bodies on very satisfactory terms. The first chassis of his, a big 'Charron', had been sent to be fitted as a pattern.

The line of cars drew up opposite the station of Tsarskoe-Selo, seat of the Tsar, the Itala car standing alone directly opposite the door. Here several hundred people greeted the Prince, and after champagne had been handed round a medal was presented to him by the president of the club, bearing the inscription 'Souvenir d'Automobile de l'Automobile Club de la Russie' encircling the club initials. On the reverse side an automobile in gold and the words 'Pekin, St. Petersburg, Paris' on it. A speech was made in French welcoming the Prince to St. Petersburg and congratulating him on being the first motorist to cross from Pekin to Paris.

Motoring received a great impetus when King Edward VII took it up. His first drive in a car, a low-powered vehicle, took place when he was at a house-party in the country. The machine was driven by an expert driver and at first all went well; but a steep incline near the main road proved too much for the car and its pace became slower and slower. Luckily, some people belonging to the estate who had gathered to see the King starting his drive crept behind the panting car and pushed it. With this help the car reached the main road and the rest of the journey went well. The passengers in the car were quite unaware of the 'man-power' which had come opportunely to their assistance.



Digitized by Google

It is difficult for those who did not live in it to realize a time in which cars were regarded with suspicion and even dread. An elderly lady friend whom I took with me on one of my first motor runs was very nervous and clutched my arm, appealing to me several times to drive slower till we were literally crawling. A woman on the pavement was pushing a perambulator, and I pointed out to my friend that we were actually moving no faster than it!

It was my fortune to put some of the earliest taxicabs on the streets of London, these being fitted with two-cylindered De Dion engines. This led to me being asked by the Battersea Polytechnic to examine horse-cab drivers who wanted to change over to cars. They had to pass an examination in the mechanical operation of the motor-car. I heard one of them turn to a pal and ask: "I say, mate, 'ow d'yer spell loobrication?" Back came the answer like a flash: "What do you think? Why, B double-e-r, Beer!"

I had trouble with some of my taxi-drivers who discovered a trick of putting hairpins, etc., in the meters, so that they would not register properly. They made private bargains with passengers, often to take them long runs. The meters did not register, and the drivers pocketed the fares, paying nothing into our company. We soon found a way of stopping this by fitting a fool-proof taxi-meter.

In the early days of motoring, before number plates were adopted, police traps were instituted, chiefly around London. On the Guildford road a certain police constable was notorious for trapping motorists who, he thought, exceeded the speed limit. One of his favourite places was near the Kingston-on-Thames Waterworks, a road which I very often used as it was in direct line with my works at Clapham Junction. I was only caught once and defended my own case in the Court. In cross-examination I had previously asked the constable at what speed I was going, and he had stated that it was about 30 m.p.h. Later, I asked him how he stopped the car and his answer was, "I jumped on the running-board." "What!" I exclaimed, "at thirty miles an hour?" The magistrate said, "Next case, please."

On another occasion I was warned that a trap was working at this same place, so we got out of the car and pushed it through the trap, which caused some amusement to other motorists who had slowed down.

Motor-cars were, of course, still new on the roads and streets, and the motorist was much troubled by what I think are now called 'jay walkers'. One evening, in hazy weather, I was driving near Battersea Park with my brother Claude, when a man suddenly darted from behind an omnibus, right in front of the car. Although



Digitized by Google

I was going moderately slow, I could not avoid knocking him down, and my brother said, "Now you've gone and done it!" We picked the man up and took him to the Bolingbroke Hospital, where it was found he was suffering from nothing worse than a slight cut on the head.

This man puzzled me and the doctors by monotonously repeating something which seemed to us to be the word 'hurt'. Even after the doctors had examined him again and had established beyond question that there was nothing serious the matter, he kept mumbling the word. The mystery was solved when we found the man could only articulate certain words very indistinctly. The word he had been trying to pronounce was not 'hurt', but 'hat'. It was his bowler hat he had missed, and he was greatly distressed at the loss.

The surgeon had put a bandage on the man's head and had turned away when the man slipped off the bandage and slung it at the surgeon, hitting him in the back of the neck. The surgeon was furious and ordered a constable to take the man off to the police station, saying he was durnk. The following morning I rang up the police, and was told, "Oh, he's all right. We know him well. He is a deaf-and-dumb mute and you can't kill them, sir." I visited his mother, who apologized for her son being out without an attendant, and I gave her a sum of money on behalf of the insurance company which she gladly accepted.

On another occasion my car skidded and knocked over a boy who was walking on the pavement. I naturally applied my brakes and, owing to the slimy surface caused by mud on the roads, the car turned completely round, breaking the railings of a hospital. The boy, who was not seriously hurt, I picked up, and he was put in one of the wards, where, on the following day, I went to see him. The accident turned to that boy's advantage. He became very interested in cars, and, to his great joy, I managed to get him fixed up in the motor industry. It's an ill wind that blows no one good!

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ARMY AND THE AUTOMOBILE

I WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THAT GREAT PIONEER OF MOTORING, Lieut.-Colonel Mark Mayhew, in an effort to introduce the motor-car to the British Army. We had to contend with much scepticism. Many in high positions regarded our cars as mere noisy, unreliable



Digitized by Google

machines likely to be more of a nuisance than of practical value. During the Boer War the War Office rejected my offer to take a car to South Africa and demonstrate its military use. I wish I had not lost their letter of reply, as it would have been an interesting document to reproduce to-day. It was to the effect that the War Office could not see that the motor would be of any service in war.

Nevertheless, we persevered. Colonel Mayhew obtained the sanction of the War Office to form the first Corps of Motor Volunteers, and he appointed me Major in command of the London area.

During one of the Army manœuvres the value of the motor-car in military operations was conclusively proved. I owned a big 90-h.p. Mors sporting car in which I carried a number of staff officers. This machine attracted much attention, not only because of its big engine, but chiefly, I think, because of the noise it made as it thundered along the roads, upsetting the horses. It was suggested that I should take General Sir Evelyn Wood for a run in my car, and I drove for several hours to where he lived, He was interested in the general use of motor-cars by the Army, but I could not persuade him to enter my car as a passenger. He thought it was too dangerous.

One of the officers in the Volunteer Corps was the Hon. C. S. Rolls. He used a tiny two-seater machine of about 10 h.p., which won favourable comment chiefly because of its silence and easy running. It was the forerunner of the famous Rolls-Royce cars which he was then beginning to develop. Royce, the engineer, was the only man who at that time could accurately synchronize the firing and timing of the six-cylinder engine. We have seen in our day the wonderful achievements of the Rolls-Royce engine in aerial warfare. About this time, at the invitation of Rolls, I joined him in his business and was able to help him in the establishment of his works and sales, but our business association was only temporary, since I preferred to be 'on my own'. As practical motorists we discussed the construction of a car under his name, and some of my ideas were embodied in the Rolls car as we know it.

Many memories of the Volunteer Corps linger in my mind.

Among our earliest members was a most pertinacious, cheerful and energetic German who pushed himself forward wherever he could, and was eager to know all the details of our organization. I had my doubts about him from the first. Many years later I was having tea with him at the Royal Automobile Club when, apparently with the idea that he might get me to further some of his schemes, he drew a cheque from his pocket and remarked,



Digitized by Google

"Vy work so hard, Vindham? I don't. Vy not come in with me?" I kept my eye on him, and in 1914, when war was declared, I reported this incident to Army Headquarters, and the German was interned. I have another memory of him. He had received a knighthood for his work in founding a well-known international club for the benefit of sailors. I met him at Hindhead and congratulated him and he replied, "Yes, Vindham, ven knights were bold, vat about it?"

One of the first inspections of the new Volunteer Corps was held at Marlborough, and members were particularly asked to go in their cars. I had not an available car at the time, and I bought one of small horse-power in Holborn. This machine caused amusement to the other members of the Corps and to the watching crowd. Next day, as I was driving it down a steep hill in a park outside Marlborough, my brakes failed to act. I was running at a great speed, approaching an entrance to the park where there were big iron gates and a gate-keeper's cottage. The car was so small and my position so cramped that I could not get out, and I knew that if the gates were closed there would be a fatal crash. I blew my horn as loudly as I could. Luckily, the woman at the cottage had just let another car through and the gates were open. I rushed through like an express train on a level stretch of road and this troublesome car stopped by itself.

The Motor Volunteer Corps was composed, for the most part, of well-known motorists, and all were officers. We received no pay or allowances or petrol issue. Our duties were chiefly to drive Army staff officers at manœuvres and to carry dispatches. On one occasion—as officer in command of the London area—I drove Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, on an inspection, explaining the different cars and introducing him to the officers. One man did not salute as we passed, and Lord Roberts said he would like to speak to him. I called the man up and Lord Roberts asked, "Why did you not salute me when I passed just now?" The answer was simply, "I am very sorry, sir." The C.-in-C. then said, "What is your name, and who are you?" to which the reply was, "My name is Russell, Lord Russell." Lord Roberts immediately shook hands with him and said with a smile, "Are you the person who makes all that row in the House?" to which Lord Russell replied, "I am that person."

An uncle of mine who had joined the Corps was seen lying on his back underneath a car, attending to the engine, and Lord Roberts wanted to know why he was dirtying his uniform. My uncle's reply was, "Oh! I only put on this uniform when I have dirty work to do!" This uncle had many extraordinary adventures. He dived to inspect the foundations of the Tay Bridge, which is



Digitized by Google

a two-mile span over a strong current—a job for a super-expert.

One story against myself. At the first motor show at the Agricultural Hall an exhibit which shared the stand with my car was a patent detachable wheel shown for the first time. The inventor asked me to join him financially in promoting it, but for some reason I declined. The invention was the well-known Stepney wheel, which every motorist was soon using, and which Scotland Yard ordered to be carried by all taxicabs. The accruing profits became huge, amounting to millions, and I had missed an opportunity.

In 1906 I was asked by the Automobile Club (now the R.A.C.) to lead a party of the inter-Parliamentary Union from London to the Crystal Palace and back. There were 110 cars following one another, each separated by a distance of about fifty yards in order to avoid blocking the roads. Even in these days it would be unusual to see in London so many cars belonging to one party, and then it must have meant a muster of possibly all the cars available. As most of the guests wore top-hats and the majority were driven in open vehicles, our procession was something of a sight for the numerous onlookers. For the use of the cars we were all personally thanked by Sir Arthur Stanley, then chairman of the club.

Rather an extraordinary incident occurred to me in those days. With my cousin, Major Ashe Windham, I had entered the lift to descend from the top floor of the Junior Constitutional Club. The lift was made to carry only four; when the lift-boy stepped in it held five—myself, my cousin (who weighed over fourteen stone), and two other passengers, one an Indian Parsee. The lift fell, carrying away the safety device at each floor as we passed until we reached the bottom with a crash. The safety devices undoubtedly arrested momentarily the descent of the lift, otherwise we must all have been killed. The Parsee got on his knees to pray, and at the bottom of the lift shaft he cried, "You must get me out of this as I have to take my seat in the House of Commons." A waggish person on the floor above exclaimed, "Well, for the present you will have to keep your seat."

The club porter succeeded in cutting a small hole in the top of the lift, through which we were all pulled up except the Indian, for whom the aperture had to be enlarged owing to his big 'bow window'. It was a curious sensation to find oneself falling, especially past four or five floors, but we got safely out without a scratch and with only a severe shaking.

One of my oddest experiences happened quite lately. I was ordered to go through an official driving test for a technical offence, with an 'L' plate fixed to my machine, just like any complete novice.



Digitized by Google

This extraordinary procedure was commented upon by most of the motor journals and many others. I was accompanied on my test by the senior examiner of the Hendon centre, and also by Squadron-Leader Mackenzie, supervising examiner for the Metropolitan area. After giving me a half-hour's thorough testing in driving and questions, they passed me as being quite satisfactory. They suggested, however, that in their opinion I looked round too much when turning. To this I replied that I preferred my own eyesight to any mechanical device.

When, during the tests, they started questioning me about the highway code, I rather surprised them by pulling over to the side of the road and bringing my car to a standstill. I told them that I preferred to concentrate, and not to talk and drive at the same time—a bit of 'sauce for the gander'. Tests should be made compulsory, as this would help to prevent those accidents which occur through ignorance of the rules of the road. It is a curious fact that many people who have passed their tests do not know the rotation of traffic lights. Ask some of them quickly what follows the red light and see if they answer correctly.

Often I am asked if I can summarize what is practically a life's experience in driving motor-cars. What I usually say is: "Never be chary about using the horn. It is always working ahead for you. It lets people know you are coming. It gives you a right of way. It helps you to escape awkward situations which might arise if you suddenly came on anyone without having given previous warning. Of course, I do not mean that anyone should make a nuisance of himself with his horn. Obviously, you need to use your discretion, and do not go along relying on the sound alone, but a habit of using it is one of the best habits you can form, especially when approaching a blind corner. You must remember it is always a point in your favour if you can prove you have given plenty of warning. You have done what is right, and that is all that can be expected. The majority of accidents are caused through motor-cyclists, and bicycles should only be allowed on the road in single file. Until the law is altered there will always be accidents caused by these machines." While travelling through New York I was struck by the way the motor traffic was regulated by coloured lights. On my arrival in England I wrote to the *Daily Mail* a report of what I had seen. That journal, with its usual foresight, gave prominence to this idea. Whether or not that had any bearing on the adoption of this system, I do not know, but the fact remains that the lights were subsequently installed in this country.



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER IX

## EARLY RUNGS IN THE AERIAL LADDER

BEFORE I COME TO MY OWN PART IN FLYING I MAY BE PERMITTED a short digression on the history of aeronautics, a subject which has long had a special fascination for me. The Montgolfier hot air balloon of a hundred and fifty years ago, raising itself from table to ceiling, was the first rung in the ladder of aeronautics. Those balloons were little more than scientific toys; yet one, made in 1783, was big enough to lift a person eighty feet into the air. The Frenchman, Pilatre de Rozier, who went up in that balloon, was the first to ascend in any kind of man-lifting contrivance.

There followed the balloon filled with hydrogen gas, the work of the famous scientist, Professor Charles. The first balloon voyage in England was made in 1784 by Lunardi, who ascended from Chelsea and alighted in a field near Ware. In the following year, Blanchard and Jeffries crossed the Channel by balloon from Dover to Calais; and in 1817 Mr. Windham Sadler crossed the Irish Channel from Dublin to Holyhead.

Balloons could only drift at the mercy of the wind, and it was a realization of this fundamental drawback which led to the building of the first dirigibles, or crude early types of airship. Men attempted to 'row' these through the air with light-weight oars or aerial paddles, as there was no other available means of propulsion.

These experiments with man-power airships failed, and were followed by the fitting of small electrical motors and steam-engines into primitive types of airship. Although this first application of mechanical aid enabled these machines to make slow progress in still air, their speed and stability were so inadequate that they could not be navigated successfully in anything like high or gusty winds.

Another and more significant advance was the flying machine of heavier-than-air type, with wings instead of gas-filled envelopes, the work of the great British pioneer who has been called the 'father of aeronautics', Sir George Cayley (1796–1857). He made the first experiments with gliding machines, and he also carried out many investigations as to the use of curved surfaces, and the stability of winged machines when in gliding flight. Sir George's coachman is said to have made some sort of short flight beneath a big glider which this famous engineer constructed.

In 1842 Henson projected a passenger-carrying aerial steam carriage, the first really elaborate attempt at anything like a big heavier-than-air flying machine with sustaining planes, controlling



Digitized by Google

surfaces, and steam-driven air-screws. But the 'Aerial Transit Company', which was formed to develop it, failed to obtain sufficient support, and this projected big machine was never constructed. Henson was able, along with a fellow research-worker, John Stringfellow, to build a small-scale model of the machine, but it was not successful. Henson abandoned his researches, but Stringfellow persevered, and in 1848 he designed and produced a model, heavier than air, which proved capable of sustaining itself in free flight under its own power. This model, which was launched from a wire and driven by a tiny steam-engine, would climb and fly short distances with perfect stability.

The experimental steam-driven machines built by Sir Hiram Maxim in England and by Clement Ader in France marked further progress. With the latter, in 1890, Ader achieved what is claimed to be the first ascent by man in any kind of engine-driven, heavier-than-air apparatus. The evidence of eye-witnesses was that Ader's machine left the ground and was air-borne for about fifty metres, but that its stability was not sufficient for sustained flight. In subsequent tests the apparatus was wrecked. In 1894 the big Maxim machine showed itself capable of lifting itself into the air, but during an experimental run it overturned and was damaged owing to the breaking of one of the check-rails, which was restraining it from free flight.

Next came attempts of pioneers to learn to balance themselves in the air. They glided from hill-tops in motorless machines which could be controlled while in flight. This proved a direct paving of the way for the conquest of the air. With the coming of the petrol engine it became possible for the Wright brothers and Professor Langley in America, for Cody, A. V. Roe, and Cockburn in England, and for Santos Dumont, Voisin, Farman, Blériot, and others in Europe, to achieve the first sustained flights in engine-driven, heavier-than-air machines.

Professor Langley's inconclusive trials with a man-carrying motor-driven machine, launched by a catapult mechanism over the Potomac River, were followed by the successful experiments of the Wright brothers, when they achieved the world's first fully controlled flights with their man-carrying, engine-driven biplane.

In those days there were no wheels fitted on the machine for landing or for getting off the ground. They were usually landed on the wet or damp grass, and were catapulted into the air by a heavy weight falling from a pylon. It was not until some time afterwards that the pneumatic tyre was used. It appears to be assumed that the first model aeroplane in which power was supplied by a steam or internal combustion engine was that made in America by Langley in 1896. But three years earlier (a fact



Digitized by Google

which appears to be little known) the Hon. Charles A. Parsons, the inventor of the turbine, produced in Great Britain a model propelled by a steam-engine which flew successfully—and he made it entirely with his own hands.

Although Professor Langley's machine was referred to as 'Langley's Folly' it is probably true to say that, aerodynamically and aerostatically, he was in advance of anybody. This was proved when his plane was taken from the museum and flown successfully many years later by the American, Glen Curtiss. What the professor lacked was training. His frequent flops in the Potomac were subject for merriment at the time, but his machine was scientifically sound.

Driven by a 12 h.p. engine, and carrying one man (its pilot), the Wright biplane first made a 12 seconds flight under the control of Orville Wright. Then a flight, lasting approximately one minute, was made by his brother, Wilbur, this second flight covering a distance of just over 800 feet. That was on 17 December 1903. After this, Santos Dumont made, at Bagatelle in 1906, the first recognized aeroplane flights in Europe; in one he covered 25 metres and in another 220 metres. Farman's chief flight, in his Voisin biplane in 1908, was circular and a mile in length. The advent of the monoplane type of aircraft was another important step, including the Blériot and the Antoinette as used by Latham.

In England, A. V. Roe's pioneer work included his short flight at Brooklands on June 8, 1908. This, although vouched for by his staff, and myself, as being one of about 75 feet, was not recognized by the Aero Club as the first aeroplane flight in England, owing to the fact that it had not been watched by an official observer, and because the machine flew straight instead of in a circle and thus (as was said) made merely a 'hop'. I did not agree with the club's decision and was much surprised at it. I argued that if a bird flew from one tree to another in a straight line it made a flight, not a hop, and that the same applied to an aeroplane. It was very hard on Roe that he should have been denied the honour to which he was entitled of being the first to make a flight in this country. The pilot who gained the first officially observed flight was Colonel J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon (destined many years later to be Minister of Aircraft Production). He flew a quarter of a mile at Leysdown, in the Isle of Sheppey, early in 1909, gaining the first pilot's certificate.

A sensation was created by Wilbur Wright's flight of two hours and twenty minutes, during which he covered nearly a hundred miles. Farman's cross-country flight in October, 1908, from Chalons to Rheims and, about the same time, Blériot's circular



Digitized by Google

cross-country flight, were in their time remarkable achievements marking the progress of aviation.

I specially designed and built a biplane for Mr. Grahame White for his attempted flight from London to Paris. The approximate length of the wings was 33 ft. and the height between the upper and lower surfaces was 5 ft. 9 in. The length of the tail in the rear of the wings was about 23 ft. The lifting surface of the machine was about 450 square feet, and its weight about 600 lbs. A special feature of the aeroplane was that the weight of the aviator and the engine was taken up by circular struts, this tending to brace the machine together. The lever was so made that by forward and backward movements the plane could be raised or lowered in the air, and, at the same time, turned to right or left. The motive power was a Humber engine of the latest design.

I recall an episode which gave me some amusement in 1909. A certain enthusiast constructed in a London suburb what I considered was a well-designed, full-sized biplane, and I lent him, at his request and on terms acceptable to both of us, my 50 h.p. Greene engine. The engine was fitted into the plane, but it failed to rise. I realized that the engine was under-powered, and demanded its return. To my surprise this was refused. After persuasion had failed, my manager said, "Leave it to me; I will get it." One night he borrowed my car, fitted with a detachable tonneau body. The idea was to invite the village constable to the local pub to have a drink while we detached the engine from the plane and put it on the motor, and to pass the pub in the car and blow the horn two or three times, keeping the engine running. Those inside the pub were to say 'Good-night' to the policeman, make a dash for the car, jump on behind, and blot out the rear light with their legs, and shout, "We've had our beer and we've got our engine—good-bye, Bobby!" This programme was successfully carried out.

Although I built a number of machines at my works only one turned out to be any good. I sold it to an aerodrome and on it many pilots were trained. The sole instructor here was eventually killed on this model in an accident. I built a plane from the design of a small model which had flown and won a prize for design and flying in the aero model competitions, and flew it round the big hall of the Regent Street Polytechnic in the course of a lecture I gave to the students there. Owing to want of space at my works near Clapham Junction station (which, by the way, are still there and are called after myself, although it is some forty years since I used them) I decided to build this plane on the roof of the 'Falcon' (I think this was the name) public-house in Battersea. Amusement was caused when the completed plane was lowered



Digitized by Google

down the side of the public-house. The *Evening News* wrote at the time:

> Within a short distance of Clapham Junction is situated one of the most novel workshops in this country. It is on the roof of a Battersea public-house. Captain Windham here constructed a plane of 40 feet in length and built of male bamboo, fitted into aluminium sockets and braced together by steel wire on the 'Blériot' system, tightened by right- and left-handed screws. The engine will be placed in front of the driver, the weight to be 500 lbs., and driven by a 25-h.p. engine.

This machine, however, never flew owing to lack of engine power, even when fitted with a 40 h.p. Greene engine.

Mention of the *Evening News* leads me to reflect upon where this country would have been in aviation but for such men as Lord Northcliffe and his brother, Lord Rothermere. The apathy of the Government, jeopardizing our very life-lines in the air, was partly corrected by the power and foresight of the Press. Lord Rothermere did a great service to the country when in 1935 he presented it with a key type machine which he christened 'Britain First'. This name expressed Lord Rothermere's desire that British machines should be better than those built by any other country. 'Britain First', forerunner of the Blenheims, had a speed of some 260 miles an hour, which at the time of writing is 40 miles faster than any American twin-engine transport machine. It was fitted with two 640-h.p. Mercury engines built by the Bristol Aeroplane Company, and was capable of carrying eight passengers.

The day is not far off when aeroplanes will be able to lift weights far exceeding anything at present even considered possible. Is there anything to prevent these wonderful machines of war from lifting, say, 50 tons or more? But this will be accomplished when, and only when, aeroplanes are built on the sides of hills cut out from the solid earth (away from danger of aerial attack) with their runways sloped downhill to give the initial impetus to lift the weight required with less power. The aeroplanes could return under their own power to hangars which could be so placed round a conical hill suitable for all directions of wind. This idea should be considered by the R.A.F. officials in authority. To-day we are not looking sufficiently ahead. Our overseas possessions demand a far greater conception of numbers of aeroplanes than we have at present, especially of the dive-bomber and heavier type of torpedoes. I predict that before this war is won we shall require not a few hundred thousand planes, but figures amounting to a million or more. Islands like de la Réunion (a French island) and Mauritius



Digitized by Google

will play a big part in the defence of India and Madagascar in the near future.

We have so much to look after, and it is only the aeroplane which can save the situation, since a sailor must keep to the sea and a soldier to the land, but aeroplane and airmen can leave both.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW I FOUNDED THE FIRST BRITISH AEROPLANE CLUB

IN 1896, RETURNING ON SICK LEAVE FROM INDIA, I WAS WALKING in Paris with my friend, the late Mr. Percy Thornton, M.P. for Clapham. We saw outside a shop in the Champs Élysée one of the early motor-tricycles just beginning to make their appearance. When that machine started to move I turned to Mr. Thornton and said, "There goes the world on wheels!" Some years later I saw in Paris that pioneer of aviation, Santos Dumont, driving along the Champs Élysée in his vermilion-painted motor-car, carrying behind it one of the little monoplane aircraft, its wings folded, with which he was then experimenting. "From wheels," I said to myself, "the world will soon be turning to wings!"

My enthusiasm for motoring had given me a keen interest in the problem of flight. I had always felt confident, and wrote that "machinery eventually could and would solve the problem of mechanical flight" that men had been grappling with so long. This belief I stated in 1908, when forming the Aeroplane Club; I sent thousands of leaflets, chiefly to motorists, asking them to help me by joining.

I had been experimenting at Wembley with a full-sized biplane and with gliders built on lines followed by the American scientist and research worker, Chanute, and had been closely in touch with the early experiments in France of the Voisins, Blériot, Farman, the Wright brothers, and others.

The year 1908, always to be remembered in flying history, provided a foretaste of what was to come. The great Wilbur Wright, coming from America to France, had amazed everyone by his precise handling of his biplane. He gradually increased the length of his flights until he was in the air for over two hours without alighting—wheeling and diving above the heads of his spectators and showing that he had absolute control over his machine! Here was the 'writing on the wall'—or, rather, in the sky!



Digitized by Google

LIFEBOAT IN A HEAVY SEA.

Digitized by Google

THE WRECK OF THE 'WARREN HASTINGS'.
The author is seen being dragged off the rocks.
(From a picture by Henry)

Digitized by Google

Yet in England at that time, as I pointed out in a letter published in the Press, we had hardly anyone working on the development of the flying machine. The following is an extract from a communication sent to the Press by an enthusiast:

## AEROPLANE CLUB

### SCHEME TO ENCOURAGE BRITISH INVENTORS

In order to stimulate a keener interest in this country in the development of the heavier-than-air flying machine—as distinct from the airship, which is supported by a gas-bag—and to assist inventors in the elaboration of their theories, an Aeroplane Club—the proposition of Captain W. G. Windham, one of the King's Messengers—is now in process of formation.

Captain Windham, who is an enthusiastic student of the aerial problem, said yesterday, "The apathy which seems to hang like a pall over English effort in the matter of flying, is, I think, solely attributable to the lack of some technical centre. France, Germany and Russia are literally alive with aerial enthusiasm; America, thanks to the Wright brothers, has more than demonstrated her prowess; but in England to-day there are not three men working upon any practical idea of a man-carrying machine."

In the formula for the founding of my club the aims of the club were summarized in these words:

To advise, help, and give practical information to all English inventors who are interested, directly or indirectly, in the 'heavier-than-air' flying machine, and to provide them with a congenial meeting-place for the discussion of their ideas.

"One of my ambitions," I wrote, "is to get famous aeroplanists to give demonstrations in this country under the auspices of the club, and so awaken a wave of public interest. Once we are well established, we shall consider the building of aeroplanes."

That was the first general public appeal for a practical encouragement of aviation in this country. I felt that the moment had come for us to get busy in England, believing firmly, as I did—and do—that flying would play an ever-growing part in the world's progress, and that we could not afford to be left behind in aviation. I had letters in hundreds from all over the country promising me support in any step to dispel the country's apathy on aviation.

'The Aeroplane Club of Great Britain and Ireland', which I established, had the distinction of being the first registered in England to deal solely with the development of heavier-than-air



Digitized by Google

flying machines. Our first membership was not more than a dozen or so, but it was not long ere we had over 1,000 members.

Many well-known people interested themselves in the club's progress and helped me to start it, including Colonel J. L. B. Templer, pioneer of the use of the balloon and airship for military purposes, Admiral Sir William Kennedy, Sir Joseph Dimsdale (Lord Mayor of London), the Earl of Plymouth, Lieut.-Colonel Ponsonby (A.D.C. to the King), and that great sportsman, Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny, who was as much interested in aviation as in steepling, big-game shooting, boxing, or any other manly sport. Among others supporting me were Prince Borghese (whose drive from Pekin to Paris I have narrated), that great cricketer, Prince Ranjitsinjhi, and several French pioneer airmen such as Voisin, Ferber, Farman, and Delegrange.

I arranged the visits of several groups of students from the Regent Street Polytechnic to Paris to inspect the aero works and the various planes and engines which were being built there. We started from Victoria station in a reserved train and were given an enthusiastic reception in Paris. These trips proved to be very instructive. I felt that everyone enjoyed this novel experience, and others interested in aviation expressed their willingness to join us.

The club's success was such that it attracted the attention of the Aero Club (then mainly interested in ballooning), which proposed for consideration a formal agreement whereby the two clubs should, as an 'expedient', be amalgamated. It was proposed, incidentally, that 'as founder of the Aeroplane Club' and 'as a special mark of appreciation of my services as such founder', I should be vice-chairman of the amalgamated club and an honorary life member. However, I felt the suggested change spelt no real advance for aviation generally, and so did not pursue the proposal.

The Aero Club mentioned above is now the Royal Aero Club. It was founded by Mr. Hedges Butler, of wine firm fame, who nearly lost his life at a balloon display at the Crystal Palace. I saw a balloon approaching with its tail-rope hanging and being dragged along the ground, and I yelled to the crowd for help. Active onlookers at once responded and we managed to catch the trailing rope. The balloon was tossing perilously in the high wind, and suddenly rose, lifting some of the hangers-on with it. But they clung grimly on, and the balloon, at one time almost on its side and bumping dangerously up and down, was brought safely to earth. Mr. Hedges Butler, who was among the passengers, always said I saved his life.

In January 1909 we had our first aeroplane dinner at the Savoy, and it was a great success. We had some 1,300 members



Digitized by Google

but no premises, and the financial arrangements were a great difficulty. Consequently, after due consideration, we decided to combine with the Motor Union, which was then under the guidance of Mr. Rees Jeffery. This Union practically ran the motor-car world, and had ample financial support.

At the dinner toasts were drunk to the success of the new undertaking. No sooner had the amalgamation taken place than Mr. Rees Jeffery accepted a position on the Road Board, and our members and funds were handed over to the Automobile Association, of which we were made honorary life members. So ended the Aeroplane Club. But it had not been founded in vain. It left its mark in the work it had done and continued to do for the conquest of the air.

Interest in aviation began to grow. By request, I lectured before the Civil and Mechanical Engineers' Society, which I considered a great honour. In this lecture, discussing how one thing leads to another, I pointed out how, without the bicycle and the pneumatic tyre, motor-cars would never have reached the stage they had already attained, and that this also held good of the aeroplane petrol engine. I added that it was only natural that our friends and neighbours, the French, should be doing their utmost to get the aeroplane trade into their hands, just as they had done in the case of the early motor-cars.

"In England," I wrote, "nobody seems to take the slightest interest in the plane. In Paris it is exactly the opposite. There the workmen are enthusiastic. Every effort is being made to capture this new flying machine trade."

Under the new amalgamation more meetings were held and further lectures given. Newspapers devoted space to our work, and it was during this time that I was invited by Lord Haldane to discuss the military possibilities of the aeroplane with the staff officers at the War Office. In the same year I was asked by the Russian Government to meet their Army Council and talk over the military uses of the aeroplane. This I did, and recommended to them the purchase of the Anzani engine. I was somewhat ridiculed by the motor Press on this advice, but after Blériot's triumph in his cross-Channel flight, in which he used this type of engine, no more was said. It was also during this period that, by request of one of the leading papers in Petersburg, I wrote for over a year a series of articles on topics in connection with the air. I look back with some satisfaction at having been somewhat helpful in the development of Russia's air service.

Another sign of the times was a pioneer Aero Exhibition in London. This took place at Olympia early in 1909. I exhibited a full-sized man-carrying type of biplane of my own design and



Digitized by Google

build which King George V—then Prince of Wales—did me the honour of inspecting when he visited the show.

So the stage was set for the greater aerial wonders soon to follow.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE HISTORY-MAKING CHANNEL FLIGHTS OF 1909

TO-DAY, WHEN THE AEROPLANE SOARS HIGH WITH MAJESTIC assurance and speeds across broad continents and seas, the younger among us cannot be expected to appreciate, as can the older, those brave beginnings when it was a feat of daring to fly at all, and a resounding achievement to fly across the Channel.

As far back as 1908 I had offered a gold cup to the first aviator who crossed the Channel in an aeroplane or heavier-than-air machine. So it was natural that in the following year, when French aviators arrived on the coast of France to attempt to fly across to Dover, I should find myself joining these pioneers, Latham and Blériot. The only other Englishman I remember seeing there was a reporter for one of the London papers—I believe the *Morning Post.*

In addition to the cup, a £1,000 cash prize was given by that great patron of aeronautics, Lord Northcliffe. The conditions of winning the *Daily Mail* £1,000 prize were: (1) That the whole flight should be made between sunrise and sunset; (2) That no part of the machine should touch the water; (3) That the flight should be by a heavier-than-air machine. The Count de Lambert, who had learned to pilot a 'Wright' biplane, was unfortunate. In a trial flight at Wissant he landed heavily and damaged his machine badly. After this, Latham made his first attempt, but he was brought down by engine trouble in mid-Channel after flying about eleven miles. He quickly obtained another machine, and by 24th July he was ready to make a second attempt.

I was staying with Latham in a little hotel at La Plage, near Calais, and that night I heard him tell the 'boots' to call him without fail early next morning, should the weather prove fine and calm. Dawn came and the weather *was* fine and calm, but the 'boots' failed to call him. I heard an altercation, Latham 'ticking off' that servant, but the mischief had been done. Blériot, whose monoplane was housed in a tent a mile or so away at Les Baraques, had stolen a march. He ascended at 5.35 a.m. and 37 minutes later alighted on English soil near Dover Castle—



Digitized by Google

the first aeroplane pilot to fly non-stop above the Channel between France and England. That red-letter day was 25th July, 1909.

Even though Blériot had got across first, Latham was keen on making this flight on the same day. By now the wind had begun to rise, and it blew so strongly that any further attempts at flying were out of the question.

Latham was still determined to be second across the Channel, and an opportunity came for him a couple of days later. Here, however, Fate again played him a shabby trick. He had practically completed his flight to Dover and was just off the end of the Admiralty Pier, when mechanical trouble brought him down into the water. Any airman attempting a flight in those days had to be fully prepared for any eventuality.

Latham, who was half-English by birth, explained to me afterwards the cause of his fall into the Channel. It appeared that early-morning dew had caused moisture to run down the rubber leads to the plugs, so causing a 'short'.

Latham's flight I witnessed from a French torpedo-boat. I had been told it would be impossible for me to get aboard, since all strangers were strictly excluded, but Latham and I happened to know the captain's wife. She smuggled me aboard and I did not emerge from below until we had started out across the Channel. Then it was too late for anything to be done about it.

There were, incidentally, two occurrences on the French torpedo-boat which impressed me so badly that I communicated them to our Admiralty. I had injured my leg owing to a slight accident shortly before, and the ship's surgeon proposed to bandage it. He had a bunch of keys, but did not know which opened the medicine chest, and when it was opened it contained neither bandages nor liniment. A gun was supposed to be fired as Latham was above our boat to denote his position. Two blank charges were fired, but both were 'duds'. Examining the gun to discover why it had not gone off, I found a sailor's blue dungaree pants stuck down the mouth of it.

Latham flew right over us, only a few hundred feet high, and he took off his cap and waved it. He also ran up a little French flag which I had given him to place on his machine. Hardly had he disappeared from view when we saw the flash of a searchlight from a vessel ahead, a warning that he was down in the water.

The first to reach Latham was a picket-boat from H.M.S. *Russell*. When we came up to help in the rescue we found him sitting on the wing of his floating plane, calmly smoking a cigarette!

In another couple of minutes, on that second attempt, Latham



Digitized by Google

would have landed on Shakespeare Cliff. Had he done so he would have been the first aeroplane pilot to fly with a letter across the Channel between France and England. I had arranged with him to carry a letter written by myself to Lord Northcliffe. In it, I took the opportunity to thank him for the work he was doing in encouraging aviation, but it never reached its destination. Actually, it was recovered after falling into the sea, but it was too wet for presentation.

Latham gave me the leading strut of his submerged plane, signed by himself, which I kept for many years. Being an historical relic, I would have given it to a museum, but although I put a label on it, 'Do not throw this away as it is of historical value', it was lost by our stupid housemaid getting rid of it.

Poor Latham! Fate treated his plucky and deserving efforts unkindly. The honour of second place in the cross-Channel flight was reserved for M. de Lesseps, who achieved it on the 21st May, 1910, in a flight of 37 minutes from Calais, through fog, in a Gnome-engined Blériot monoplane.

The redoubtable Blériot told me some interesting things about his remarkable flight. When he left the French coast he out-distanced his escorting torpedo-boat, and soon found himself above the Channel with no vessel of any kind in sight, and with nothing whatsoever to guide him. "I did not know where I was," he said. Then, in the distance, he caught sight of land ahead and found himself approaching the English coast near Deal. He could have landed on the beach there, but as he had arranged previously to alight at Dover, if possible, he flew on up the coast in the direction of that town, near which he was troubled by turbulent wind currents, and had to steer seaward for a while. Then he saw a gap in the cliffs and steered straight in for it, flying over battleships and the cliffs, till he found himself in an eddy of wind behind Dover Castle. He made two complete circles, stopped his engine, and then came down, striking the ground heavily, damaging his under-carriage and breaking his 'Chauvier' propeller.

What might have happened if Latham had been called early on that morning of Blériot's flight? It might have meant that Blériot and Latham would have been starting together in an air race across the Channel to be first to reach Dover. If both machines had kept in the air, I do not think there would have been any doubt about the result. Latham had by far the faster and more powerful machine. In his successful flight, Blériot was timed to fly about 26 miles, coast to coast, in approximately 33 minutes. Latham, in the attempt which brought him down just off Dover, covered 20 miles in just about 20 minutes. In his 'Antoinette' monoplane, in which he made his second attempt, Latham still



Digitized by Google

used an 'Antoinette' engine developing 100 horse-power. Blériot's machine was fitted with a 25–30 h.p. Anzani motor, air-cooled, and having three cylinders 105 × 130 and running at 1,600 revolutions per minute. It weighed 66 kilos. A suggestion that these two champions should engage in an air race was made to me by the directors of the White City, who asked me to arrange the contest, and who were willing to put up a prize of as much as £4,000. But the scheme did not prove practicable. We examined the grounds, and while it might have been possible to get the flyers to do exhibition flights there, the locality was not suitable for aerial racing.

Blériot was guest of honour at a luncheon in the House of Commons, and Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P., did me the honour of asking me to arrange the guests. Among those in the big dining-hall overlooking the terrace were Mr. Lloyd George, Walter Long, Lord Blyth, Major Baden-Powell, F. E. Frost (President of the Aeronautical Society), Arthur du Cros, M.P., the famous 'Colonel' Cody, the Hon. C. S. Rolls, the Hon. R. Lygon, Henniker Heaton, M.P., of postage fame, Hedges Butler, founder of the Royal Aero Club, A. V. Roe, great British pioneer, and Captain Ferber, distinguished French aviator.

Blériot, when replying to the principal toast, mentioned that while crossing the Channel he had caught sight of some British submarines below, and had wondered what the fate of such vessels would be when the flying machine had obtained full mastery of the air. What foresight! He went on to speak earnestly of the need for Britain and France to do their utmost in this new art of modern warfare. Cody, I recollect, in a vigorous speech, asked his hearers to bear in mind that France was not the only country for flyers or flying in those days.

When my turn came to respond for the English visitors, I felt it necessary to deplore the apathy shown by people in England, and particularly by their Government, in allowing France to get ahead with aeroplanes just as she had done with the motor-car in the early days, while we just stood and looked on. "Did hon. members realize," I said, "that there were not more than three people in the country who were interesting themselves in the practical development of aviation?"

After lunch we all went out on to the terrace, where Sir Benjamin Stone took photographs of us. One particularly good photo which he took was of that picturesque character, 'Colonel' Cody. He was seen standing with his flowing cloak, wide-brimmed 'Buffalo Bill' hat, beard, and pointed moustache, an odd touch being given to the general effect by a big piece of plaster on his forehead, where he had cut himself in a recent flying mishap.



Digitized by Google

The originals of these historic photographs were hung in the corridors of the House.

On the same evening, the Aeroplane Club, which I founded, entertained Blériot at a wonderful banquet at the Hotel Cecil. The chairman was Sir George Wyatt Truscott, Lord Mayor of London. He had Madame Blériot on his left, and Blériot on his right. Shackleton was also with me, seated on my right. Four hundred guests attended, including some of the best-known people in London.

Just after the banquet had begun a special wireless message came to me from mid-Atlantic from Signor Marconi. He was a member of my club, and I was one of his first pupils in wireless at Chelmsford. Such a message from far out in the ocean was a novelty in those days. Since it is a historic message I reproduce it textually:

*From ship* Corona *on the Atlantic Ocean. Deeply regret in consequence of being at sea on way to America inability to be present to-night. Please convey my congratulations to Mons. Blériot, and my wishes that aeroplanes may soon travel through space with the same ease as the electric waves which convey this message.—Marconi.*

The Lord Mayor proposed the toast of the French President, and Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, sent us a special message, saying that everybody joined in congratulating the great French nation on the achievement of Blériot, one of her sons.

It was at this dinner that the gold cup I had offered was presented to Blériot. On one side of this cup was a picture of the cliffs of Dover, and on the other side Calais, while the inscription on it read:

Presented by Capt. W. G. Windham, Founder and President of the Aeroplane Club of Great Britain and Ireland, to M. Louis Blériot, in recognition of his being the first man to cross the Channel in an Aeroplane. July, 1909.

This crossing had an immense influence on the public mind, particularly in Great Britain. All through the centuries we had been effectively separated from the Continent by the Channel. When Blériot sped through the sky to Dover we had to realize that the 'silver moat' was no longer defensive in the older sense. The people of England had to realize, whether they liked it or not, that the world was moving into a great phase of flying, and that it would be imperative for us to devote ourselves just as energetically to 'airfaring' as, in the past, we had done to seafaring and the motor-car.

It was of no use, after Blériot had made his flight, to pooh-pooh



Digitized by Google

the aviation enthusiasts. The time-honoured saying, 'You can no more do that than fly', had lost its meaning. Those of us who had been preaching the gospel of aviation, hitherto to more or less deaf ears, now felt our faith was beginning to be justified.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE THRILLS OF EARLY AVIATION

I SHALL TRY TO RECALL THE HAZARDS AND THRILLS OF EARLY aviation, and to claim for the earlier fliers who risked, and in some cases lost, their lives, the gratitude which is their due.

One of my most vivid memories is the first air meeting ever held—on the big plain of Bethany, near Rheims, in August, 1909—when flying history was made in presence of vast crowds filled with wonder and enthusiasm. I was invited to help in organizing this meeting, and one of my first duties was to register the names of the flyers taking part. I still retain and prize as a souvenir the autographs of a wonderful group, signed round a photograph of Rheims Cathedral. The names, reading from the left-hand bottom corner, are:

Levavasseur, Leblanc, H. Rougier, Delagrange, Cte. de Lambert, G. H. Curtiss, G. R. Cockburn (only Englishman), N. Enlbron, T. Kluytmer, Roger Somner, H. Latham, Paulhan, Lefebre, Legagneux, Fernandez, Jean Gobron, E. Buneau Varilla, C. Blériot, Henry Fournier, Paul Tissandier, Louis Rouguet, H. Farman, E. Laurent, Pesnault Pelterie, and Captain Ferber.

The fact that among all those aviators only one, Mr. G. R. Cockburn, should have been British, emphasized the appalling apathy existing in this country at that time on aviation. Most of the leading airmen then flying were present with the notable exception of the Wright brothers—who had, of course, actually been the first men to make fully-controlled flights in an engine-driven heavier-than-air machine. But biplanes of their design and construction were flown at Rheims by Tissandier, the Comte de Lambert, and Lefebre.

On the day the French President paid us a visit it was estimated that there were 100,000 people present. Sir John French had come over to Rheims from the military manœuvres he was attending at Chalons, and he and the French President met. There were cries of "*Vive l'Entente Cordiale.*" President Fallieres made a tour of the sheds, congratulating Blériot and Latham, and also Lefebre and Curtiss, the American. Blériot and Latham were, of course, public heroes after their Channel flights. Lefebre had astonished



Digitized by Google

and delighted the crowds at Rheims by the brilliancy of his flying in his Wright biplane. His daring in hovering over the heads of the crowd caused him to be fined by the officials.

I made friends with this clever pilot, and remember discussing with him the respective merits of biplane and monoplane. It was the latter type of craft I personally believed in. Later, when Lefebre was killed at Juvissy, outside Paris, I wrote in my notes:

"When this biplane's engine stopped, the machine came down nose-first, whereas if it had been a monoplane it probably would have glided to earth."

One of the biggest favourites with the public at Rheims was Hubert Latham. Every time he flew past the enclosure in his Antoinette spectators jumped to their feet, cheered, and waved hats, handkerchiefs, and sunshades. Latham raced a train from Paris which happened to be passing. He flew neck-and-neck with it for about two miles, then he forged ahead and beat the train. In those early days of flying this was a feat, and the excitement was intense.

Latham climbed 500 feet and won the height prize, and he also made a winning distance flight of 154 kilometres. Henry Farman—whose parents were English, though he himself lived and worked in France—reached a height of 340 feet. At this meeting Farman remained in the air for three hours four minutes, and also succeeded in flying with two different passengers, thus displaying the possibilities of the aeroplane as a means of transport. Curtiss, the American, won the international speed contest, flying at 47 miles an hour.

Thrills we had in plenty. Paulhan flew in a wind blowing at 25 miles an hour, a feat considered astonishing at the time. The spectators seemed to go almost frantic over it. Rougier lost control of his machine, which dashed into the crowd, knocking one man down without injuring him seriously. Blériot, flying in the speed race, had a petrol pipe broken and his machine crashed and burst into flames. Fournier had an accident which destroyed his machine. Both were unhurt.

That Rheims meeting marked a gigantic step towards the conquest of the air and dispelled the doubts of even the most sceptical as to the future of aviation.

Blériot offered me one of his machines for a sum of money—I forget how much—and I sold it for double the price before I left the ground or even paid for it. Actually, I never saw the machine.

Soon after Rheims came England's first aeroplane meeting, held on the Town Moor at Doncaster, scene of the St. Leger race. The Aeroplane Club I had founded played a major part in bringing



Digitized by Google

about this meeting, and I undertook the difficult duties of clerk of the course. We certainly had our troubles at that meeting. The Royal Aero Club had been organizing a similar event at Blackpool, and they wanted us to postpone ours. As we had been planning this event long before the Aero Club's scheme was mooted, I did not feel inclined to agree, and we decided to go straight ahead on the date arranged. The controversy reached such a point that the Aero Club began threatening French flyers who were coming to our meeting with all sorts of pains and penalties—including banning them from all further competitions held under the auspices of the Aero Club or associated bodies. A large section of the Press was against the Aero Club for what was described as its high-handed action. One of the vice-presidents of the French Aero, the Count de la Vaux, openly voiced his disapproval of the British club's attitude. Mr. Roger Wallace, K.C., the chairman of the R.A.C., offered to bet me I should not get any airmen to fly for me, but he was wrong. The flyers we had engaged stood by us loyally, and though the weather was unkind, and we had to fight against difficulties, that Doncaster event justified all the time and trouble. The newspapers reported it in full; people came from all over the country, and the influence it exercised on the public was immense.

Some of our problems had their amusing side. The aeroplanes of certain foreign pilots coming over here were reported to be lost in transit. This mystery I solved when I discovered that these pilots had omitted to pay the transport charges on their aeroplanes—a by no means inconsiderable sum—and that the carriers were holding up the machines until these costs had been defrayed. There was only one way to deal with this obstacle. The costs were paid, and the planes duly turned up at Doncaster.

Pioneer aeroplane pilots were apt to be temperamental and easily offended, as they say all great artists are, and had to be handled diplomatically. At Doncaster some of the foreign champions had a dispute, on financial grounds, with the local Corporation and refused to take their machines out until the matters at issue were settled to their satisfaction. Fortunately, we had among our flyers that great sportsman and splendid fellow, the late 'Colonel' Cody. He got us out of our difficulty by bringing his big biplane out on to the aerodrome and asking for a short flight. After which the others felt they could not very well hang back, and so we soon had things going normally.

We had aeroplanes and racehorses out on the Town Moor at the same time. The racehorse trainers, who had the right to exercise their horses on the moor, insisted on continuing to do so, though our flying machines were on the scene. We therefore saw time-



Digitized by Google

honoured horse transport contrasted with the newest transport. Actually, our aeroplanes flew round the Doncaster course in the same direction as the St. Leger race is run.

My work as controller was no sinecure, what with getting the planes ready, arranging flights, and seeing that holes were filled in and the ground levelled where required. One ditch had not been filled in as completely as I had ordered, and Cody's big biplane, taxi-ing over it, sank suddenly into it, coming to a standstill with its tail sticking high in the air. Cody proved equal to the occasion. Borrowing a rope from one of the officials, he quickly made a lasso, *à l'Américain*, threw it over the tail, and pulled his biplane into a normal position. The crowd yelled with delight at these 'Buffalo Bill' tactics.

One of our biggest thrills was provided by the Blériot pilot, Hubert Leblon. One day, when we had about 25,000 people on the aerodrome and a troublesome wind interfering with the flying, Leblon decided to make circuits in his monoplane. Soon it was apparent that he had a most difficult task. We could see his machine swaying and swerving, dropping a few feet and then rising again as he struggled against the gusts sweeping across the moor. The crowd cheered him again and again; but his fellow-pilots, who knew the risks he was running, looked grave. Suddenly he was swung half-round by a vicious gust and he was heading straight for one of the enclosures packed with people. Spectators, wedged together, saw the plane bearing down on them. A band which had been playing stopped abruptly. There were gasps of dismay from the grandstands.

Leblon showed fine presence of mind. He saw that between the spectators and a belt of trees beyond there was an open space just large enough to land in. Rearing his machine in the air like a horse jumping a fence, he swept just above the heads of the vast crowd, then, stopping his engine, he dropped in that open space in time to avoid crashing into the trees. Thus he averted what might have been a terrible accident. Public and officials were so delighted that he was raised shoulder-high and carried amid shouts of triumph, and the band played again.

Leblon, who had been a well-known motor racing driver, proved an unusually fine aeroplane pilot. I was sorry to hear, not long after our Doncaster meeting, that, like some other pioneer airmen, he had been killed while flying. He met his death at San Sebastian. Another Frenchman we had at Doncaster was Leon Delagrange—sculptor and scientist as well as airman. He flew a Blériot monoplane fitted with one of the 50 h.p. Gnome air-cooled revolving engines, the first seen in England—a wonderful motor which played one of the greatest parts in the early



Digitized by Google

days of aviation. Delagrange won the speed contest at 45 miles an hour, doing one of his circuits at about a mile a minute, a record speed in those days. Poor Delagrange was also a martyr for aviation; he was killed while flying at Bordeaux.

At Doncaster I went up with Cody as a passenger, sitting behind him in his biplane. It was during this flight that he took his hands off the controls and raised his arms above his head, while at his request I grasped both wrists to hold them in that position. Thus in an almost complete circuit of the course he proved the automatic stability of his machine, which he steered by his feet on the rudder-bar.

I had entered a monoplane of my own design and construction for Doncaster, but owing to a mishap it was not flown. It will be something of a sidelight on the times when I say that the sight of this machine mounted upon the chassis of my motor-car for transport by road created a sensation in London. A crowd had assembled to see what was then a novelty, and when I drove away from our committee rooms in Piccadilly the thoroughfare was completely blocked by spectators and the police had to clear a way for me.

At a banquet to the aviators, Mr.—afterwards Sir—Theodore Cook, Editor of *The Field*, referring to the flying we had just witnessed, said that "*for the first time, after centuries of effort, a miracle has been achieved*"—adding that, "if in peace we are so astonished, what is our astonishment going to be when such instruments of the air are *used in war*?" Prophetic words!

In the speech I was called upon to make, I emphasized that the United Kingdom, "owing to the fact that it is an island, should be ahead of all nations in the conquest of the air, and that in years to come it would be necessary for us to have a complete command of the air as well as of the sea."

It was at the Doncaster meeting that Cody, by request, became a naturalized British subject. The Town Clerk of Doncaster brought the official document to him to the aerodrome, and Cody laid this paper on someone's back to sign it.

At the banquet, Cody received many congratulations on having become a British subject. The gathering grew merry, and I suggested that the only way for a flyer to be naturalized was "to turn him upside down and pour champagne down his trouser-leg". This we did, till the wine flowed out and down Cody's long hair. He was a big and heavy man, and the process was difficult. A speaker at the banquet said he hoped that if flying became general there would be no 'air hogs' as there had been 'road hogs'.

Another of the early meetings in England was a year later and held at Bournemouth in connection with the town's centenary fêtes.



Digitized by Google

Many spectators attending the Bournemouth meeting, having never seen an aeroplane before, became so excited that they broke through the barriers in their endeavour to inspect the machines at closer quarters. Mounted police had great difficulty in clearing the course.

It is one of my saddest memories of pioneer flying that the Hon. C. S. Rolls should have been killed during the Bournemouth meeting. This tragedy took place during a competition in which the winner was to be the pilot alighting nearest to the centre of a big target on the aerodrome. The course involved a left-hand turn, followed by one to the right. A cross-wind made landing difficult, and it was owing to this that Charlie Rolls lost his life. He made too steep a descent, and it was the general belief that the tail of the outrigger of his French-built Wright biplane bent under the vertical stress and fouled one of the propellers. The biplane crashed heavily. Poor Rolls never spoke or moved again, having been killed almost instantaneously. Some newspapers, in relation to this disaster, published articles condemning aviation for the unnecessary risks involved. But there can be no progress without sacrifice. Actually the pioneering phase of flying was carried out with a small loss of life. The Wright brothers, for example, carried out all their first experiments without serious mishap. Wilbur died of typhoid fever. Orville, it is true, was involved in one bad crash in which he broke his thigh and his passenger was killed, but Orville is alive in America to-day.

Blériot survived all his experimental flying; his death, a few years ago, was caused by heart trouble (he told me that his pulse was only about forty beats a minute). Henry Farman is another famous survivor of early days; so is little Louis Paulhan. When he retired from aviation he devoted himself to flower-growing in the South of France. Yet another pioneer who survived countless dangers, to die a natural death, was Santos Dumont. With us to-day, we still have such British pioneers as Verdon-Roe, Sopwith, Moore-Brabazon, and others. At the Bournemouth meeting the Hon. Allen Boyle fell and was reported killed, but the report was untrue and he is alive to-day.

Flying has been growing steadily safer as more and more miles are flown annually. So the undaunted faith of the early aviators is justified. As Amy Johnson said, "Great liners are to-day flying over the paths of these early pioneers."



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XIII

## FIRST AEROPLANES IN ASIA, AND FIRST AIR MAIL

I HAD THE DISTINCTION OF TAKING THE FIRST AEROPLANES TO Asia and of organizing the first air mail in the world. This arose from a request made to me by the Government of the United Provinces in 1910 to take some aeroplanes for educational purposes to the Allahabad Exhibition to be held in the following year.

Confident as to the future of aviation, I decided to give up my motor business and booked a passage to India in 1910, taking with me two flyers, M. Pequet, a Frenchman, and Mr. Keith Davies, an Englishman, and eight aeroplanes, two of them biplanes and six monoplanes. The biplanes, similar in type to the French 'Somner' machines of that period, were fitted, one with a 45 h.p. Humber engine, the other with a 50 h.p. French 'Gnome' engine. The monoplanes resembled the 'Blériot' in type and had 35 h.p. air-cooled 3-cylinder Humber engines. One of the monoplanes shown at the Allahabad Exhibition was awarded a gold medal.

Packed in huge crates the aeroplanes were shipped from England to Bombay and from there railed in special trucks to Allahabad. With much trouble we put the machines together and erected a sort of hangar for them on the banks of the Ganges. There was nobody to whom we could turn for help in a wholly new enterprise since our aeroplanes were the first to be landed in Asia. There was the heat, and the language difficulty (I did the interpreting as I could speak Hindustani) and, to make matters worse, the Gnome engine of one of our biplanes had been sent from France without spare parts or tools.

Here is an extract from the official report I wrote for the United Provinces Government:

> It is interesting to note that up to the present time a distance of some 396 miles has actually been flown at the Allahabad U.P. Exhibition, thereby probably establishing a record in aviation annals, insomuch that 250 miles of this has been flown over the Ganges and Jumna rivers, in places where it would be impossible for a plane to descend should the engine stop or anything go wrong with the machine; also in the fact that this distance has been flown at an average altitude of 1000 feet without an accident and without anything of importance going wrong with the machine.

An air mileage of 396 would, of course, appear insignificant to-day, but it did not appear so to us in 1910. There were the



Digitized by Google

difficulties of 'air pockets' when flying, the heat, and the large thorns all over the ground which punctured our tyres and made it necessary to repair them after almost every landing. These thorns were so hard and sharp that they were used by the 'Tommies' in their gramophones in lieu of needles.

Incidentally, this experience of punctures prompted me, in the present war, to write to the War Office suggesting that nails that would penetrate any ordinary tyre should be strewn on the roads to impede an advancing enemy, and I also submitted this idea to the French. The only thanks I got was a letter saying that my correspondence had been submitted to the Attorney-General as it was against regulations to have sent it to the French without permission. The Attorney-General wrote me to the effect that "there was nothing doing". I am convinced that if flat-headed nails had been strewn on the roads from Brussels the Germans would have been checked in the use of their small advance mechanized units sent out to cut telephone wires and on other destructive missions. Later I read in the Press that the Russian Army had used this device: "Soviet soldiers at road junctions strewed sharp nails." Some two years after I had made my suggestion I received a letter from Libya stating that the Germans were using the same device.

Experience has made me conclude that it is quite useless to try to be helpful to Government Departments.

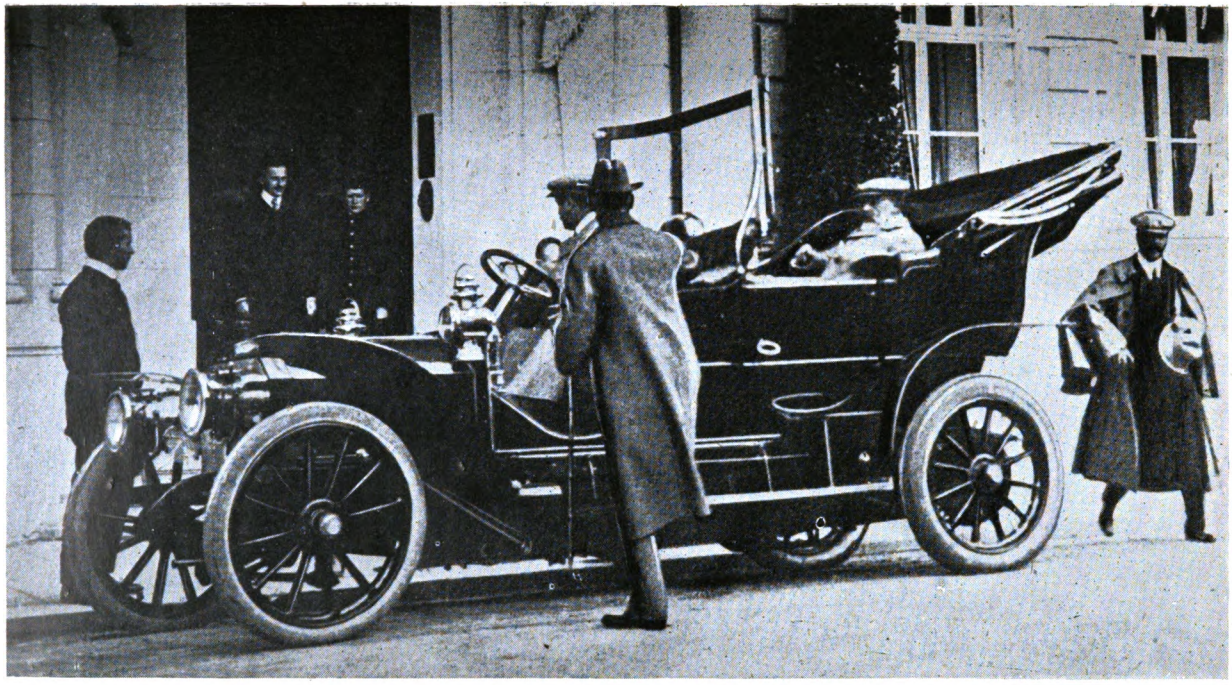
The 'air pockets' our machines encountered—sudden upward and downward currents of air—were specially difficult at Allahabad. No aircraft previous to this had been landed in a hot country such as Egypt or India. What made the 'pockets' especially bad at Allahabad was the varying temperature over the ground caused by the flow of the two big rivers, Jumna and Ganges.

Under these conditions our monoplanes were not too successful. They would not rise more than 20 or 30 feet, lacking the necessary power. We could not get enough 'revs' out of the engine, but our Gnome-engined biplane flew well and M. Pequet was able to take up some Indian passengers. H.H. The Maharajah of Kishengarh in Rajputana was one of these. Before their ascents I myself had gone up with M. Pequet, being the first person in Asia to make a flight as an aeroplane passenger.

Why did I not pilot any machines myself? What deterred me was the fact that I weighed in those days some fourteen-and-a half stone and I found the machines then available not up to my weight. Repeatedly and on every occasion I tried to pilot one I came to grief. The *Motor-Car Journal* of Saturday, 16th July, 1910, stated: "On Tuesday, Captain Windham had several short flights at Brooklands in a monoplane built by himself, which ultimately

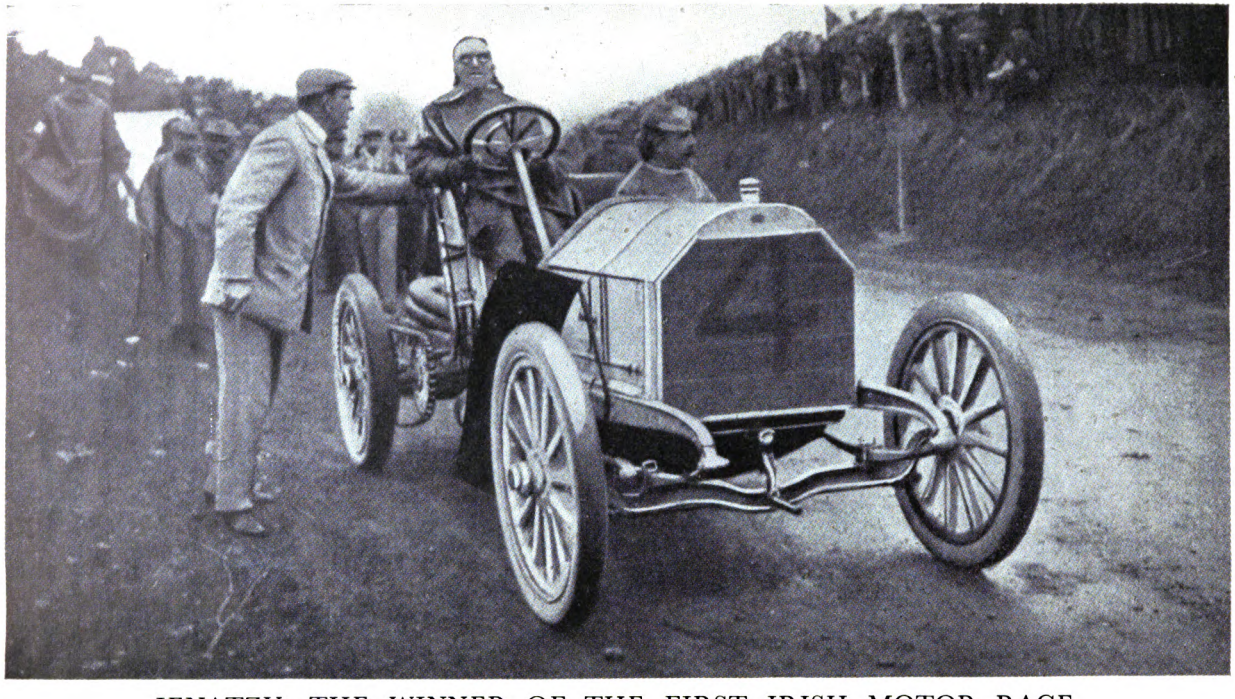


Digitized by Google



KING EDWARD VII AT MARIENBAD OUTSIDE THE WEIMAR HOTEL.
*(Photograph taken by the Author)*

Digitized by Google



JENATZY—THE WINNER OF THE FIRST IRISH MOTOR RACE.
The author—who had charge of the winning-post—telling him to make way for the others,

Digitized by Google

turned over on alighting on soft ground." I tried over and over again at Brooklands, but I could not get a machine to fit me.

To give an idea of what flying was like in those days, it was quite common for aviators to smoke a cigarette and blow the smoke upward. If it did not rise vertically, no flight would be attempted. I have seen people shifting things from one pocket to another before flying, and on one occasion I heard a pilot jokingly say to a friend, "You had better part your hair in the middle, or you'll have an upset." Most flights at about that time—that is, about 1908 and early 1909—were merely short 'hops'. If pilots got twenty feet off the ground, they thought themselves lucky.

A. V. Roe, the designer and maker of the well-known Avro machine, got his eighteenth certificate for flying on a triplane of his own design, which he built for me and I purchased from him. Early one morning he went down to the aerodrome at Brooklands where my plane was housed, took it out of the shed and did his flight which earned the certificate. I followed shortly afterwards and found him with my aeroplane on the aviation grounds. He told me he had made his flight on my machine and I asked him who would have paid for it had he crashed (which was a common thing in those days.) He replied, "Well, I haven't done so," and I could say no more. The early morning was usually chosen to make these test flights on account of the stillness of the air.

At Allahabad I saw one example of the strange mentality of the lower-class Indian native. Our biplane, having been made ready, and the English colony having assembled to watch its flight, I strolled across to the banks of the Ganges to see this aircraft circling round the the parade ground. A coolie squatting on the river-bank, washing his clothes, never even looked up when the 'plane roared some thirty or forty feet above his head. This was an extraordinary insensibility since the flight was the first in India.

The respected clergyman of the Holy Trinity Church, Allahabad, asked me if I could help him to raise funds for his new hostel, and it occurred to me that this could be done by inaugurating an aerial post. The Postmaster-General of the United Provinces and the Director-General of the Post Office in India granted the necessary permission for this novel mail and a special postmark was authorized. The die for it was cut at the instance of the Government of India, and I had the honour of drawing the design, the silhouette of a biplane in flight over the mountains of Asia.

This was the first official aerial postmark and almost every country has copied the idea.

Our airmail, it was decided, should operate from the parade ground in the Allahabad Exhibition grounds (I, a quite unofficial



Digitized by Google

person, appointed the clergyman postmaster!) crossing the Ganges, to a post-office in Aligah. From there letters were to be despatched in the usual way by surface transport to destinations throughout the world. The public were invited, through the Press, to use the air mail to send stamped letters containing a British postal order for sixpence, or its equivalent, six annas, to the chaplain of Holy Trinity Church, Allahabad before 16th February, 1911. Afterwards, covers signed by the aviator who had carried the letters were sold up to as much as £25. The organizing committee of the Exhibition used the air mail to send complimentary letters to most of the European Monarchs, to leading Statesmen and Members of Parliament, and to the few people connected with aviation in different parts of the world.

I sent a letter to the late King George V in the following terms:

*May it please Your Majesty:*

*I have the honour to request that you will be graciously pleased to accept the enclosed as a souvenir of the first official air post which was dispatched from the United Provinces Exhibition at Allahabad, and carried by aeroplane under the Government Post Office regulations, 20th February, 1911, under cover bearing the impress of the first air post.*

*I have the honour to be, Sire,*
*Yours most obediently,*
*Walter Windham.*

The reply I received was:

*Dear Sir,*

*I am commanded by the King to thank you for the letter received from India by this mail bearing the inscription 'First Aerial Post', which will be an interesting addition to his Majesty's collection of stamps.*

*Yours truly,*
*Clive Wigram.*

By 10th February a large number of letters had been received for dispatch and everything went almost without a hitch, a wonderful achievement considering the difficulties we all had to contend with. A large sum of money was raised, sufficient to build a new hostel for the Indian students. It was proposed to call it after myself, 'The Windham Hostel', but I thought that a better name would be 'The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel', which was adopted.

The inaugural flight of our air mail was watched by the Governor, Sir John Hewett, Lady Hewett, and the Government Staff, while it was estimated that over a million natives, assembled



Digitized by Google

for the Festival of *Hartel*, when they wash their sins away in the sacred waters of the Ganges, were present. One newspaper printed the following comment: "Mr. Rudyard Kipling dreamt of a great flying mail through the sky to New York, but Capt. Windham has succeeded in actually reproducing this movement on a small scale."

When the time came for us to leave, Pequet, Davies, and I were all congratulated by the United Provinces Postmaster on the educational work we had done for the people of India. Many thousands of Press cuttings from Indian and English newspapers were sent to us, some of which are still in my possession. The chaplain and his staff presented each of us with a special scroll written in English, Urdu and Hindustani, thanking us for what we had done in the interests of the Indian students. The design was surmounted by a collection of highly priced Indian stamps, of fifty rupees downwards, placed in a semi-circle, with the postmark of our aeroplane mail embossed in the centre. Alas! Both M. Pequet's and mine were stolen. If someone has them, I should be more than grateful if they were returned. They are of the greatest sentimental value as souvenirs.

I received congratulations from most of the crowned heads of the world, including letters from Heneker Heaton, Hedges Butler, founder of the Royal Aero Club, and one, which I value most of all, from Alexander Graham Bell, known as the inventor of the telephone. Here are copies of those received from the two last-named:

*The Crescent, Allahabad,*
*18th February, 1911.*

*Dear Captain Windham,*

*Allow me to congratulate you and your associates upon your successful demonstration of the practicability of establishing a postal service through the air.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*(Sgd.) Alexander Graham Bell.*

*Captain Windham,*
*The Club, Allahabad.*

*Princes Chambers,*
*Pall Mall, London, S.W.*
*15.3.1911.*

*Dear Windham,*

*Many congratulations for your inauguration of the first aerial service. It was most interesting to receive a communication by this means, and I can imagine nowhere more suitable than the Plains of India. Please*



Digitized by Google

*send by aerial post from Allahabad the enclosed envelope, for which purpose I enclose five shillings for stamps.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(Sgd.) F. Hedges Butler.*

We were asked to take the monoplanes to Bombay, and arrangements were made for them to be flown on the Oval. This place was surrounded by a high canvas screen and a charge was made by the promoters for entrance. This was the first time that the aeroplane had been used during darkness. The whole place was lit up by lamps and many thousands of people attended the performance.

As one of my pilots, M. Pequet, had been injured, a Captain Dawes (winner of the Aero Club's 17th certificate), then serving in India, volunteered to take his place. This offer I gladly accepted. He it was, who, unfortunately, fell across the Kalabar railway line during his flight. The flying could not take place in the daytime owing to the strong sea-breezes and it had to be done during dusk.

Mr. Keith Davies made a flight from one end of the Oval to the other, a distance of several hundred yards, to the great joy and enthusiasm of the onlookers, who thronged round him, hanging their garlands of strong-smelling tuberoses around his neck.

Our mission was over and we had fulfilled our Government contract. We had done more. The attention of the world had been drawn to the possibilities of the aeroplane for high-speed transport and for carriage of mails. I had achieved my ambition of proving the aeroplane a benefactor of mankind and of demonstrating its commercial value.

Here is a letter, in typical Indian form, written many years later:

*Madras,*
*Dated 5.8.35.*

*From*

*K. Seshadri, B.A.,*
*Postal Accounts Department,*
*27, Egmore High Road,*
*Madras, India.*

*To*

*Sir Walter Windham, Esq.,*
*5, Lees Place,*
*London, England.*

*Dear Sir,*

*In this royal Jubilee year which happily synchronizes with the completion of the twenty-fifth year of civil airation in India, I have very great pleasure in addressing a gentleman of your fame and eminence*



Digitized by Google

*who has the unique privilege of being the founder of the air post in India. Your efforts in this respect are more commendable than the achievements of the winners in the London-Melbourne Air race or again the record flights into stratosphere. With the passage of time your name will stand out as the pioneer of the Indian Air Service among other things.*

*May I, therefore, as one interested in the devopment of the Posts and Tels. Service humbly request the favour of your furnishing me with a copy of your photo and your signature below? I believe I am certainly giving you trouble by this type of request; but I trust you will pardon me when I say that my enthusiasm and interest have emboldened me to approach you with this request.*

*Thanking you in anticipation of your valuable favour,*

*Yours truly,*

*(Sgd.) K. Seshadri.*

Whilst I was in Allahabad the Crown Prince of Germany paid a visit to India, entailing exacting duties upon the police forces concerned, who were responsible for his personal safety. Their anxieties were somewhat increased by the Prince's attentions to a certain young Princess in Allahabad, the Princess Marlat, granddaughter of the exiled King of Burma, King Theebaw. There were six granddaughters, all of whom I knew and admired, especially Princess Marlat. They were fascinating to a degree, with their tiny hands and feet, and each always wearing an orchid in her hair.

A big 'Reception' was held in honour of the Crown Prince (I cannot precisely remember where—but probably at Delhi) at which the military were in full dress, and all the different Services represented. To the surprise of all, especially the police, His Royal Highness managed to escape attention and leave the function. Everyone wondered what had become of him.

I was asleep that night in the corridor mail train after a day's shooting, when about 1 a.m. someone got into my compartment, causing needless disturbance. I said, "Excuse me, but can't you be a little less noisy?" Then I noticed a box with a crown on it. At Allahabad Station the train was met by the police and I realized who my companion was. He was on his way to see Princess Marlat. This affair upset the officials and was the subject of common gossip throughout India. I cannot vouch for all the details after so many years, but I well remember the talk and what an unwelcome guest the Prince had been to the Indian Police.

Princess Marlat asked me at times to carry letters to the Prince. This I did, and he used to write to me asking me if I could convey this and that to Marlat. She corresponded with me even after I left India.



Digitized by Google

Burmese women are most attractive and sometimes marry British officials. I remember asking one high official in Burma who had so married if he were taking his wife to England with him. To my question he rather indignantly replied, "Of course, I am. Why shouldn't I?"

I cannot close this section of my book without a tribute to the 'Gnome' engine. I think it was almost perfect and that it revolutionized aviation. A great merit was that it could be easily cleaned; it worked well because it was well constructed; and it kept working because it was almost dust-proof. It became hot but never too much so. In 1909 and 1910 it served us well. Although, as I have said, we had no spares and had to borrow tools, the engine did all we sought or expected of it.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ROYAL CORONATION AIR MAIL

I CAME HOME WITH THE AMBITION TO ORGANIZE A BRITISH AIR mail, and I felt it could be appropriately linked with the Coronation of King George V. in 1911. I knew the formidable character of the obstacles that the bureaucracy, apathy, and the 'red tape' of Government departments present to the innovator. But I went to see the then Postmaster-General, Sir Herbert Samuel, M.P., now Lord Samuel, and was happy to find him sympathetic and anxious to help. He had studied all the information available about the Indian air mail experiment and I gave him first-hand knowledge about it, emphasizing its technical success and how it had aroused public interest.

There was one obstacle which the Postmaster-General pointed out. Special fees would be necessary, as in India, for air-borne letters; postal regulations forbade increase in the postal charges and an Act of Parliament would be needed to authorize any change. At Sir Herbert Samuel's suggestion I went away to think about a means of surmounting this obstacle, and I submitted a scheme for the issue of specially printed air-mail envelopes and cards to be on sale, not in post offices, but in big shops and stores of London. To these special envelopes and cards the purchasers could affix the necessary stamps and post in special red letter-boxes which I offered to provide, and which could be placed at convenient points in chosen shops and stores. My plan provided for an official collection by the Post Office of letters and cards from these boxes,



Digitized by Google

and their transport by a G.P.O. van to the Western District Office, where they would be stamped with a Post Office mark giving the date and bearing the words, 'First United Kingdom Aerial Post'. They could then be taken to an aerodrome and flown for a specified distance, to be delivered in the customary way.

This met the difficulty and an official agreement was entered into between the postal authorities and myself. The document has historical interest as the first agreement entered into by the British Post Office, or that of any other country, for transport of letters by aeroplane. I received this letter from the General Post Office:

*General Post Office,*
*London.*
*15th May, 1911.*

*Sir,*

*With reference to the interview which you had at this office on the 2nd instant and your letter of the 10th instant, respecting the institution, for a limited period, of an aerial post between certain points in the United Kingdom, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to state that he is prepared to make arrangements for the conveyance of letters and postcards, (but not of registered correspondence) by aeroplane between the Post Office and the Festival of Empire, Crystal Palace, and certain places in the United Kingdom to be hereafter agreed upon, on the understanding that he accepts no responsibility in respect of any loss, damage, or delay, which may be due to transmission of such correspondence by aeroplane and that the Committee which you propose to form, or their duly authorized representatives, enter into a formal contract for the conveyance of the said mails by that means.*

*The postage stamps would be obliterated by means of a special dated stamp which would include the words '1st U.K. Aerial Post'.*

*The Postmaster-General has no objection to offer to your proposal to arrange for specially designed covers and cards to be supplied for the purpose in question and to be sold at a special price, the proceeds, after payment of expenses, being devoted to a suitable charity.*

*You will no doubt be so good as to call here at an early date to arrange the necessary details, and you will perhaps say what date and time would be convenient to you. Any date (except Saturday) at about 11.0 a.m. would be suitable.*

*I am,*
*Sir,*
*Your obedient servant,*
*Matthew Nathan.*



Digitized by Google

The following conditions were made public:

CORONATION AERIAL POST

(By authority of the Postmaster-General)

A special 'Aerial Postal' Service will be organized during the week of the forthcoming Coronation of Their Majesties.

The profits will be devoted in aid of THE CENTRAL FUND IN LONDON FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE DISPENSARY SYSTEM FOR THE PREVENTION OF CONSUMPTION and THE KING EDWARD VII HOSPITAL FUND.

The Aerial Service will be available only for the conveyance of Letters under cover of a special envelope, and of special Post Cards issued by the Organizing Committee by permission of the Postmaster-General, and must be posted only at receiving offices appointed by the Postmaster-General.

A Corps of Aviators will carry the Aerial Mail by Aeroplanes from the receiving offices to the various Postal Towns appointed by the Postmaster-General, and from thence the letters will be transmitted to their destination in any part of the World, in the ordinary course of post.

The special envelopes and post cards will bear a design illustrating the varied methods of postal transport in the development of the Postal Service.

The Postage Stamps will be the first circulation of the King George V issue, and will be impressed by the Postal authorities with a special posmtark bearing the words FIRST U.K. AERIAL POST.

All letters and post cards conveyed by the Aerial Post will be at the sender's risk, and no letters exceding an Ounce will be accepted.

The Envelopes and Post Cards will be on sale at various centres in the London Postal District, where they must be addressed and posted.

The Envelopes and Post Cards, including postage up to One Penny, will be supplied at a charge of One Shilling each. Foreign Postal fees exceeding One Penny must be paid in addition.

Applications by post must be accompanied by a remittance and acknowledgments will be transmitted, to any person and address desired, by the Aerial Post in the special envelope bearing the King George V stamp, and the special Aerial Postmark with the date of the Coronation.

The Letters and Post Cards will constitute an appropriate and unique souvenir of great historic interest and value.

My way was clear. First I had a suitable pictorial design prepared for envelopes and cards. After an introduction by Mr. Lewis Poole, I suggested to Mr. W. W. Lendon, the artist I had selected, a picture embodying a view of Windsor Castle with an aeroplane above it. I chose Windsor Castle because I had planned to donate the proceeds of the air mail to the King Edward VII Hospital at Windsor. It was also my intention, if possible, to obtain



Digitized by Google

permission for Windsor Great Park, and the East Lawn at the Castle, to be alighting points for the flights by my postal aeroplanes from London.

This pictorial design turned out very well, and I arranged for our envelopes and cards to be printed in different colours—black, mauve, green, purple, brick-red, brown and grey. This gave the public a choice of colours and encouraged them, as we hoped, to buy a number of the different envelopes and cards. This idea of a picture has been copied in almost every country.

The envelope cost 1s. 1d., and the post card, 6d., and a stamp of sufficient value had to be affixed. Permission was granted me by His Majesty the King, in the following letter, to use Windsor Great Park (instead of the Crystal Palace as previously suggested) as one of the terminal points of my flying mail:

*Windsor Castle,*
*28th June.*

*Sir,*

*The King has given leave for you to land in the Park with your aeroplane on July 7th, and I have instructed the Police accordingly.*

*A flag will be placed in the vicinity of the proposed landing-place.*

*If you wish to communicate with the Police, please apply to Inspector Hudson, Windsor Castle.*

*I remain,*
*Yours faithfully,*
*Esher,*
*Lt.-Governor.*

The next step was to arrange a departure point and I chose the Aerodrome at Hendon, practically the only one existing at that time in the London area. Then came the important problem of aeroplanes and pilots, and choice in both was then very restricted. I had no one to help me except Mr. Lewis Poole, Secretary of the Royal Society's Club, who offered his services, for which I was most grateful. I was made an honorary member of this Club, in St. James's Street, which I used as an office. I had hoped to obtain the services of Colonel Cody, but for one reason and another this could not be arranged. It was eventually agreed that the provision of 'planes and pilots should be the responsibility of the Graham-White Company, owners and operators of the Hendon aerodrome—our team of pilots, as ultimately arranged, comprising Gustav Hamel, Clement Greswell, Charles Hubert and E. Driver.



Digitized by Google

To my mind, there was no better pilot in his day than Gustav Hamel. Scandinavian by birth, but partly English, he had learned to fly at the Blériot school at Pau. I watched him handling a monoplane on his return to England and realized what an outstanding pilot he was becoming—flying not only with exceptional skill but also with fine judgment. Clement Greswell had learned to fly at the age of twenty-one, having been taught by the Graham-White School. Greswell himself then became an instructor, flying a biplane constructed in my own aeroplane works at Clapham Junction. Subsequently he taught Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Salmond to fly. Charles Hubert, a Frenchman, had proved himself a very clever biplane pilot; while Driver, a South African, had also been flying well at Hendon. I reckoned we had the best team that could be assembled at the time.

For weeks before our service started, Mr. Poole and I worked day and night on details. The special wooden, red-painted pillar-boxes for use at the various shops and stores, and in which people 'posted' their air-post letters and cards, were made at my motor and aeroplane works at Clapham Junction. One of these boxes, which I presented to Madam Tussaud's, was destroyed subsequently in the big fire at that show-place. I am told there is still one at Windsor.

It soon became evident that our scheme was going to be an overwhelming success; so keen were people to send letters and cards by this first British Air Mail that in some places I found them queuing up to purchase letters and cards.

It was interesting to listen to the comments. Many wanted to take part in this first experiment, but there was scepticism since much was being written about the unreliability of aeroplanes, constant forced landings, and cancelled flights. But there need not have been doubts. The first day of our flying post gave striking proof that a plane handled by an expert could even at that stage of aviation be flown through a wind approaching gale force.

On 9th September, 1911, we were due to fly our first mail-load from Hendon to Windsor, a special 'privilege' bag, containing violet-coloured envelopes and cards addressed to our King and Queen and other reigning Sovereigns, and greetings from the Postmaster-General to various foreign colleagues. The Press and others also sent letters of greeting to Ambassadors and notabilities all over the world. I sent one to Captain Scott, who agreed to take it with him to the South Pole and return it to me. But tragedy hung over his famous expedition. The letter was returned to me marked 'Victoria Land. 18th January, 1913', as 'undelivered owing to the sad death of Captain Scott'. The notepaper, I remember, bore a simple but expressive device of a penguin erect



Digitized by Google

on the earth's pole, and a scroll with the words, 'British Antarctic Expedition, Terra Nova. R. Y. S.'

One of the air-mail letters, recalling the suffragette days, was sent by the Women's Social and Political Union to the Prime Minister, then Mr. Asquith, and read 'Remember votes for women in 1912'. Another message on a post card was lyrical: 'Behold the ethereal tribe, speeding along the wings of light, as hosts of angels, with their messages of joy to the denizens of earth. Pray keep this card as souvenir of first post through the air. Despatched from Hendon Aerodrome to you, with greatest care.' This post card was duly preserved.

All was ready for the flight. There was a distinguished gathering at Hendon, and officials waited at Windsor, with a group of Press photographers and cinema cameramen (the films were shown in the London halls that night). The wind, as I have said, blew hard, but to have cancelled or postponed the opening of the service would have been a calamity since the critics would have exclaimed that the aeroplane was not reliable for the carriage of mails.

Hamel behaved splendidly and fully justified our choice of him. He took off with the special 'privilege' bag, weighing just over 20 lb., and we realized his difficulties. Twice, as he said afterwards, the gusts of wind nearly overturned his 'plane. Happily, when clear of the ground and on his course he had a following wind and he reached Windsor in twelve minutes, his speed averaging 105 miles an hour. He flew over Windsor Castle, to the towers of which many people had climbed to see him, while others were assembled on the ground. Hamel could not land on the East Lawn as intended and made the best descent he could near the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore in the Great Park. My request for permission to have a stone tablet erected to mark the landing-place was granted by Royal favour, but the project never matured owing to the expense. I think some public institution should erect a tablet of an event which was really of national importance.

This was one of the finest flights on record. Unfortunately, Hubert was not so lucky. Soon after he had taken off his machine crashed and was wrecked, and both his thighs were broken. The mail-bags acted as a sort of buffer when the machine hit the ground and probably this prevented even more serious consequences. On the advice of the Duke of Teck a payment of £500 was made to Hubert in compensation for injury. The Hendon-Windsor mail flights went on for ten days, during which our aerial postmen flew over 700 miles in 34 trips. The financial result was a balance of £937, which was handed to the King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor. Prince Christian, President of the hospital, sent this gracious acknowledgment:



Digitized by Google

*Frogmore House,*
*Windsor,*
*15th November, 1911.*

*Dear Captain Windham,*

*As President of King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor, I beg to acknowledge, with most grateful thanks, the cheque for £937 14s. 2d., which the Duke of Teck has forwarded to me from the fund of the Coronation Aerial Post on behalf of the Hospital.*

*I am very pleased to tell you that a bed will be named 'The Coronation Aerial Post Bed'.*

*I need hardly say that this Hospital would do all in their power for any airman who should, unfortunately, be injured in this district.*

*I most heartily congratulate you and the committee on your successful undertaking.*

*Yours truly,*
*Christian.*

The last time I was in the hospital this bed was not occupied by any airman, but by a sick old woman who was being made comfortable there and who knew nothing about its history, or about the inscription above the bed.

All that I received from the Post Office by way of recognition of this experimental work was this stiffly formal letter:

*General Post Office,*
*London,*
*29th September, 1911.*

*Sir,*

*I am directed by the Postmaster-General to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your communication of the 27th instant in which you report the conclusion of the work which you undertook in respect of the conveyance of mails by aeroplane from Hendon to Windsor.*

*I am, Sir,*
*Your Obedient Servant,*
*(Sgd.) Walis G. Garis.*

*Capt. Windham.*

But twenty-three years later Sir Herbert Samuel made generous amends, in this foreword to a descriptive account of '*The Coronation Aerial Post, 1911*,' published by Messrs. Francis, Field and Baldwin, Sutton Coldfield:

I wonder whether, when that flimsy, open-seated aeroplane took off from Hendon one afternoon in September, 1911, to carry a 23 lb. bag of mails to Windsor in connection with King George's coronation festivi-



Digitized by Google

ties, anyone had the vision to foresee that within twenty years His Majesty's mails would be carried regularly through the air to the most distant parts of the Empire. I wonder whether anyone foresaw that in less than a generation a British Airways Service would be sending its aeroplane three million miles in the course of a single year, and that in most of the civilized countries of the world air-mail services would be regarded as a matter of course. I must confess that the Postmaster-General of that day did not fully foresee such eventualities. Yet, holding that office, I was anxious to encourage in every way in my power an invention, then in its infancy, which was clearly of great promise. It needed publicity in order to gather support for its development. The Coronation furnished the occasion: Sir Walter Windham and his co-adjutors suggested this demonstration; the General Post Office was glad to give the fullest facilities; the public responded to the opportunity; and the thing was done.

It was the first air-post to be flown in the United Kingdom, and that was an event worthy to be commemorated in the history of the world's communications. Before too long an interval has elapsed, it is right that a complete record should be compiled and published. This service Messrs. Field and Baldwin have rendered, performing their task with great thoroughness and skill.

I commend this monograph to all who are interested in air travel and in postal communications, and in the noteworthy British enterprise which was the pioneer combining the two.

(Sgd.) HERBERT SAMUEL.

*London, W.2,*
*12th March, 1934.*

Realizing the success and possibilities of these air-mail services, I became keen to start a similar service between London and Paris in 1911. The old *Daily News* asked me about it and published the following reference:

## PARIS TO LONDON AERIAL POST

### CAPT. WINDHAM ARRANGING A TRIAL TRIP

Following the experiment of the aerial post between Hendon and London, it is now proposed to establish an aeroplane mail service to and from London and Paris.

One of the organizers of the scheme, Captain Windham, explained yesterday to a *Daily News* representative that before a regular service is established there would be a trip between the two capitals, the aviator-postman carrying only a 25-lb. bag of post cards. The cards will be artistically illustrated, so as to commemorate worthily the event and symbolise the *entente* existing between France and England.

Capt. Windham added that he was endeavouring to arrange for an initial trip to start from Paris. There are difficulties in the way with regard to inaugurating the service on this side of the Channel,



Digitized by Google

as the British Post Office authorities have, so far, declined to entertain the proposition.

But those difficulties were to be overcome. If I quote, on the other hand, the criticism of a leading aeronautical journal while the Coronation Post was being inaugurated it is only to show how scepticism dogged our enterprise. This was the journal's acidulated comment:

The farcical affair which is being boomed by almost all the daily papers under the name of the 'aerial post' was inaugurated with even more than the flamboyance one might have expected on Saturday last, and thousands of misguided people paid to enter the Hendon aerodrome. The solitary bright spot in the whole pitiful proceedings was Gustav Hamel's really fine flight, which was made simply because, if he had not sacrificed himself, the first instalment of the so-called 'aerial post' would not have been carried by a British subject.

## CHAPTER XV

### MEMORIES OF THE LAST WAR

THE LAST WAR NOW SEEMS REMOTE, BUT IT HAS FOR ME, AS FOR so many others, abiding memories. On the historic August night when Britain went to war with Germany I was at Nairn, in the North of Scotland. Next morning I telegraphed to the Admiralty and the War Office offering my services, and it was the latter who communicated with me first and wanted me for transport. In view of my sea experience, however, I thought it best to accept the naval appointment which was also offered.

I was ordered to go at once to Marseilles and I went with the first Army contingent leaving our shores. Everything was hurried, and I had only time to get myself a second-hand naval uniform. My task was to prepare the way for the arrival of the first Indian troops in France, and I found my ability to speak both French and Hindustani useful.

On the way out to Marseilles I suggested that a day-and-night look-out for submarines should be undertaken by our R.N. officers and passengers on the ship. This plan was adopted, and a notice was duly posted up to the following effect:

BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVN. CO., LTD.,
T.S.S. *Mandala.*

NOTICE

All male passengers who will offer to keep watches for submarines during the voyage to Marseilles, Malta, and Port Said are requested



Digitized by Google

to meet in the First Class Music Saloon at 9.30 a.m. to-morrow (Tuesday) to arrange the Watches.

All are asked to help.

Watches will be kept from 6 a.m. to dinner time.

---

Lt.-Commander Windham, R.N. and Capt. Martelli, I.A., are keeping from 6 to 8 a.m. to-morrow (Tuesday).

This brought a good response, which won the grateful thanks of captain and crew.

One of my jobs, and no easy one, was to supervise the unshipping of a large number of horses arriving from India and Australia. Many of these animals refused to come out of the hold up the steep slanting platform from between-decks. At last I ordered them to be pulled up backwards by a rope fastened to the roots of their tails, a method which worked quite well.

When another officer was in charge of this awkward disembarkation, several hundred horses had been got ashore, and were tethered to one long rope, and some grew restless. Nearly all of them broke loose; they ran wildly all over Marseilles, some of them finishing by jumping into the docks. The face of the poor officer-in-charge was a sight!

About this time I noticed a mysterious fisherman who haunted the quayside near where the unloading of enormous quantities of war stores was in progress. I discovered that he was fishing in salt water with a garden worm! I reported him to the police, and the 'fisherman' was found to be a German spy!

A very plausible man insisted on joining us at a restaurant table in Marseilles. He got into conversation, and one of his questions was, how many Indian troops were expected at Marseilles? I told him about 100,000. This seemed to take him aback, and he exclaimed, "O! My Gott!"

My suspicions were again aroused, but I betrayed no sign. I told him that I thought I might be able to introduce him to an officer who knew much more about the Indian contingents than I did if he would care to meet me at the same place on the following day.

We then got into communication with the local police, who arranged a trap. A detective, dressed in naval uniform, appeared in the restaurant and played the necessary part, giving all the 'information'. The man was arrested, and I heard later that he was a well-known spy and was shot.

The French liner *Charles Roux* was handed over to us by the French for the use of the military contingents arriving from India and Australia. Among those who were entertained on board were



Digitized by Google

H.H. Pertab Singh, H.H. Bikaner, and H.H. Jodpur, and also H.H. of Kishengarh, a well-known polo player of Rajputana, who flew with me at Allahabad in 1910. I remember the fine old warrior, Pertab Singh, saying to me that he would never leave the soil of France until the Germans were beaten. He was godfather to General Haig's child, born during the war.

In connection with this ship I acted as Mess President, and after I had seen the heads of the different departments in Marseilles I was able to persuade them to take off the tax on whisky. As this was our national drink, I felt that the tax would be very unpopular. I received many letters of thanks from officers serving in the Army, and, so far as I remember, this tax was never again imposed.

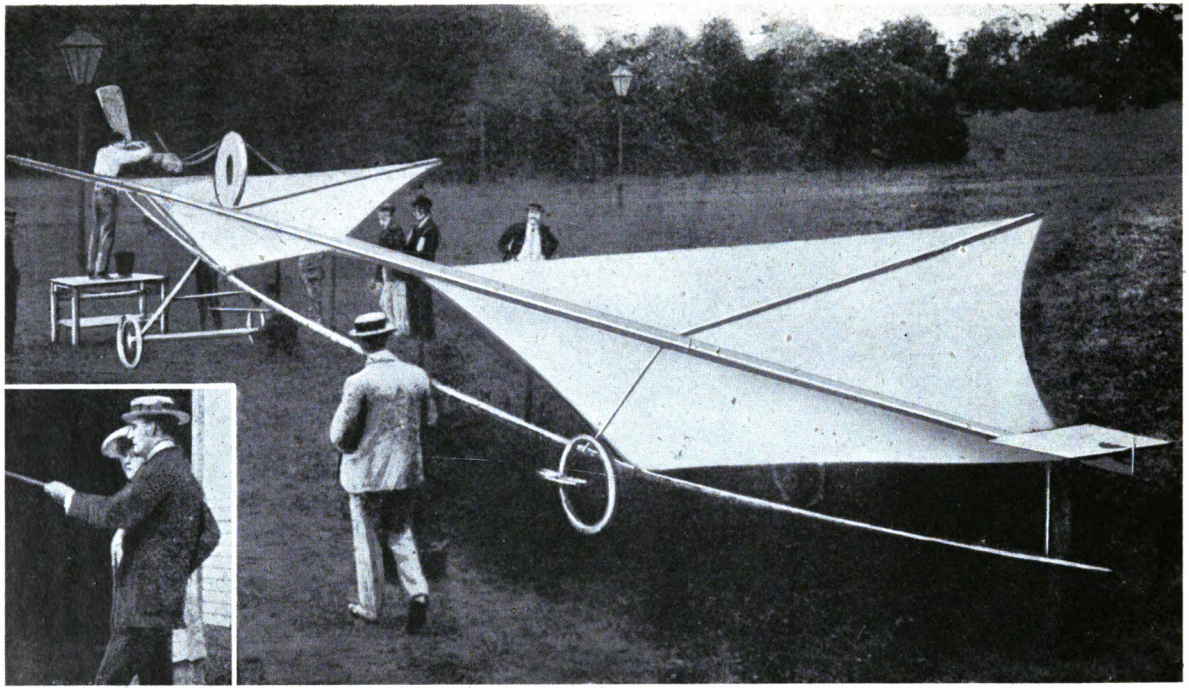
After Marseilles I was ordered to the Shetland Islands, with the special task of looking out for, and reporting the movements of, enemy submarines. From our posts in the Islands we were able to spot these craft quite frequently because they were obliged to come to the surface to take bearings owing to the treacherous and ever-changing tides. The reports we were able to flash through the post offices played a very useful part in the general campaign against these formidable under-water pests.

On my arrival in the Shetlands I met Admiral Startin, and we very cautiously discussed the relations between us, since I had been appointed to look after certain specified work in these Islands and we did not know exactly where we stood. Everyone who knows Admiral Startin admires him because of his high principles and religious belief. He is, at the same time, intensely human. On one occasion, which I hope he will excuse me recording should he read this, he said to me, "Can you give me any idea what to do about these men? They come on duty in the evening the worse for drink and refuse to answer the sentry's challenge." I said, "Why not tickle them up with the bayonet?" or words to this effect. He replied, "That is a good idea." I was told afterwards that the first chap who did not give the password got such a tickling up that he had to go to hospital. After that, every man who passed the sentry gave the password without further ado. Later, the Admiral complained that the men were still drinking too much, and between us we arranged the plan of putting them on board a disused hulk in charge of a pugilist. This apparently worked well, as there was no further trouble! Admiral Startin only stayed a short time on the Islands, and while he was there I greatly enjoyed his company.

We divided the Islands for our purposes into four parts, each part being looked after by an officer (three of the officers were the sons of Sir Arthur Nicholson of Fetla). One of their chief duties



Digitized by Google



THE AUTHOR WITH HIS 'DOUBLE MONOPLANE' AT WEMBLEY PARK.

Digitized by Google

AVIATION MEMBERS ASSEMBLED AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF BLERIOT.

*From left to right*: M. Bleriot's Secretary, Madame Bleriot, Bleriot, the Author, Sir Benjamin Stone.

Digitized by Google

was to arrange watches for detection of enemy submarines. When a submarine was sighted we lit a cairn which was built up of stones filled inside with kelp, a dried seaweed which produced a dense smoke, similar to the smoke-screen as used to-day (which, by the way, was the invention of a German named Liebert living in this country during the last war). When the cairn was burning, the next look-out, four or five miles away, would be able to keep the submarine in sight.

This was much the same device as was used to give warning of the approach of the Spanish Armada, and it served its purpose well. There was only one telephone, situated on the highest part of the Island, and it was used to inform the authorities in Lerwick, the capital, of the movements of German submarines. Naturally one had a number of false reports, investigation usually showing that the 'submarine' was nothing worse than a basking shark lying on the surface in one of the voes.

The wind of the Shetlands is unforgettable. Many times in my small Morgan three-wheeler I was almost blown off the road and could not proceed. But the climate is never very cold, the Islands being surrounded by the Gulf Stream. One rarely sees a flower of any sort except in the summer, when they spring up overnight, but their bloom is of very short duration owing to the wind.

Several times during the war I visited the Orkney Islands. Later, while staying at Hoy with a shooting party, I was lucky enough to see one of the German battleships being raised to the surface in Scapa Flow. While at this place I heard some extraordinary stories from all types of people about the sinking of H.M.S. *Hampshire* with Kitchener on board. They were certainly very 'hush-hush' stories of cries and moans from men trying to scramble up the rocks and no attempt whatever being made to help them. All the Islanders were prepared to vouch for this and other curious rumours connected with the wreck.

One of my duties during the war was to examine all cases where vessels had been sunk. A story was circulated that a trawler, keeping its lonely vigil at night on the North Sea, was suddenly attacked by a German submarine which rose to the surface, an officer shouting through a megaphone asking her nationality. The trawler, fitted with only one small gun, replied by hoisting his ensign. The submarine, equipped with the latest devices for the destruction of life, then fired into the trawler, knocking down part of her structure and telling her to haul down her flag. This the skipper refused to do. Finally she started to sink and the crew took to their boats. Many of them were saved; but not the skipper, who went down with his ship.



Digitized by Google

It is related how a woman, visiting the skipper's widow, remarked what brutes the Germans were for attacking such a small vessel. The widow replied that the Germans were only doing their duty like her husband, adding, "The Germans could kill my husband, but they cannot kill his spirit because it lives there"—pointing to his child lying asleep in its cradle. Such is the wonderful spirit of the sea.

One thing that bothered me for a time in the Shetlands was that so many places bore a similar name, and there was thus a risk of errors in the tranmission of reports. To get over this I devised a method of squaring the maps we were using, and then of numbering each square. Our reports then referred to a particular numbered square rather than to any coastal place-name. This idea worked very well. An important naval official who visited us asked if he might borrow this squared map of mine. He took it away and I heard nothing more at the time. Later, when in London, I ascertained at the Admiralty that every chart was being marked on his squared system. The head of the Hydrography Department told me (in confidence) that it was my idea put into practice. I understand that charting by squares is used to-day by the R.A.F. for locating their positions, only on a more minute scale.

In the Shetlands we kept a close look-out for any suspicious craft. A motor-driven ketch of some 150 tons anchored in one of the voes, or creeks, and I was soon aboard her. She was a foreigner, and I was far from satisfied with her charter. So I had an armed guard put aboard, and, by Naval orders, she was sent to Scapa Flow. There, after further enquiries, she was interned. This, incidentally, was a case where I was entitled, with my men, to prize-money, but we received nothing.

People often ask me why I was serving in the Navy with only the rank of Lieutenant-Commander, although I was some 46 years of age. I was promised by the Second Sea Lord that I should have my promotion, but I never got it. A vessel had entered Lerwick Harbour with a cargo, and I found that the bottom of the ship was full of copper-ore. The Admiralty refused to prevent her going out of the harbour. I wrote to a very old friend of mine, Sir Clement Kinloch Cooke, M.P. for Devonport, telling him the circumstances, and he—on his own initiative—raised in the House of Commons the question why the vessel had not been detained by the Admiralty. This upset headquarters, and consequently I was not promoted.

While I was serving in the Navy a leading Sunday newspaper asked me to write an article about the Dogger Bank action, and I interviewed a friend of mine who commanded a torpedo-boat on that occasion. He told me how, when the British and German Fleets



Digitized by Google

were blazing away at each other and shells were bursting all round, one of the hatches on his ship suddenly opened and a greasy stoker put out his head for a breath of fresh air. Evidently continuing a conversation below he emphatically remarked, "Well, all I sez is, 'e oughter 'ave married the gal!" Then the stoker disappeared as suddenly as he had emerged.

From the Shetlands I went to Malta. While I was there a five-masted American schooner came into port laden with fish destined for Greece, but which I suspected would eventually reach Germany. I went on board the ship frequently and talked to the Captain, and his requests for permission to sail I put off with something about his papers not being in order. When finally I let the ship go its cargo was in such a state that it was very doubtful whether the fish would be edible by the time it reached the Germans.

At Malta I suffered from severe internal pains and I was sent home and operated upon for acute fulminating appendix. Someone who knew of my motor-car device of more than one body for a chassis wrote in the *Motor* at the time: 'Captain W. G. Windham, R.N., has been seriously ill with appendicitis. How he must have sighed for an interchangeable body.'

As soon as I was well and about again I began working on food production, urgent then as now, under Sir Percival Perry, head of the Ford Motor Works, to whom I have already referred, and I got permission from the London County Council to plough up part of Battersea Park, since I had to train volunteers in the use of the tractor.

Back again in the Navy, I was appointed Chief of Staff at Buncrana, near Londonderry, my task being mainly to help in safeguarding the American troops who were beginning to arrive in this country. It was a notable achievement of the last war that some 2,000,000 American troops were landed in this country without the loss of a man. In view of the operation I had undergone the Admiral made it as easy as he could for me by appointing me to night duty and I could snatch some sleep in the telephone room.

One night the signalman reported to me that a submarine had been 'chatting' in square so-and-so, and that the trawler on duty had asked its position for the night. He said that usually in similar circumstances the trawler was moved into another position, but I thought it would be wiser to leave her where she was as an American boat was due to pass the area shortly. A little later the signalman rushed in saying, "Good news, sir; the trawler has sunk the submarine and got the whole crew. What are my instructions?" I told him to report it to the Admiral and tell the trawler to bring the crew ashore. It was known afterwards that this same submarine



Digitized by Google

was the one that sank the S.S. *Laurentic*, which carried chiefly gold bullion and war material. The gold, and one of the lifeboats, was salved eventually from the sunken ship.

The following day the Admiral said, "This is your job; will you take the German crew to Buncrana Junction and send them to one of the internment camps?" This I did. As it happened, the great black crew-boys, who formed part of the crew of the sunken ship and who had lost everything, met these Germans at this junction and there set upon them, trying to push them down the open latrines.

After that I was appointed to the naval base at Immingham, near Grimsby, where nightly we saw Zeppelins coming from the direction of Hull. The searchlight seldom if ever picked up these enormous airships and I thought how much more difficult it would be to hold a fast-moving aeroplane in the beams. Many years later, in 1938, I mentioned this to Lord Strathcona, then Under-Secretary for War, at the War Office, and he arranged that I should meet some of the leading experts in searchlight work. At the War Office I demonstrated to them with a spotlight in my hand in a darkened room that if they used a fast-moving flashing light instead of a stationary one they would much more readily catch something in the beams. Once an object was picked up it could be retained by a stationary or fixed light, as used to-day. But my suggestion was shelved. Curiously, the first Zeppelin was brought down at Cuffley on the private chapel of the late Lieut.-Commander Glen Kidston, my stepson.

At Immingham there was a rather amusing episode. The Admiral gave orders for all officers and men serving in the port to be present on a certain date and at a certain hour for the presentation of a medal to a bluejacket who had done conspicuous work for his country. I was on the Admiral's staff, and it was my duty to see to the arrangements. About a quarter of an hour before the time allotted for the officers to be present in dress uniform, with swords, I saw the officer—who, by the way, was reputed to be over seventy years of age—whose duty it was to ensure that the man to receive the medal was present. He said he didn't know where the man was, and I told him that something had better be done or there would be trouble. He hurried off and returned with a man. I found out afterwards that the officer went up to the first bluejacket he saw in working dress and said, "Here, would you like to receive a medal?" Time was short and the man was told to come just as he was, although rather untidy. He stood on the parade ground in front of everyone, the Admiral said some nice words to him, the White Ensign was mast-headed, the band played the National Anthem, and the man received the medal!



Digitized by Google

Soon after this, still feeling unfit after my severe operation, I asked and was granted permission to leave the Service. I was then serving in the Shetlands, and I returned in the ill-fated ship, H.M.S. *Hampshire*, in which Kitchener was to lose his life off the island of Hoy in the Orkneys.

On the night that I arrived in London I dined with Mr. Burdett-Coutts in his lovely Piccadilly house, and there I sat alongside the lady who was to be my wife. I was engaged in 1916, and we were married in 1917 at the Chapel Royal, Savoy by the Rev. Hugh Chapman, a cousin of my wife. Miss Isolde Menges played the violin during the signing of the register. I had known her since her childhood and had always loved her playing.

My wife was the widow of Captain Glen Kidston, of the Black Watch, eldest son of the founder of the Clyde Shipping Company. Her grandmother, the Hon. Mrs. Keith Stewart, daughter of Sir Charles FitzRoy, Governor of New South Wales from 1846 to 1855, had the honour of cutting the sod for the first railway laid in Australia. One of her relatives, John Kyrle, was the famous 'Man of Ross'. My wife had two sons and three daughters and lived at Gwernyfed Park, Breconshire.

Both her sons took to flying, and her daughter, Audrey, took her certificate at Brooklands and won a prize of £50 for all-round efficiency as a pilot. She was also known as one of the best women cross-country riders in England. They were all accomplished and the girls much admired.

Captain Glen Kidston was much beloved in his own district and highly spoken of by all who knew him; he was a great sportsman, an excellent shot, keen on games, a great philanthropist, and a lover of mankind.

His son Glen's exploits (to which I shall refer in a later chapter) are well known; and the younger son, Home, is keen, like all the family, on speed—motoring, flying and boat-racing—owning a speed-boat, racing cars, and an aeroplane. He is in the Navy, and was in the *Kelly* when she was bombed and sunk off Crete. He had a wonderful escape from being drowned before and afterwards, and I know his actions were described as 'magnificent' by his Commander. He is devoted to the sea and his profession.

When this war began, much was heard about the inefficient arming of the Merchant Navy. Thank God, this has been, so far as we know, effectively remedied. It was not so in the last war, and the British Empire Union was formed to urge better protection for our ships and naval convoy. I organized a meeting in Glasgow under the banner of the League to urge these measures and I wrote at the time to the Press:



Digitized by Google

It is inconceivable to me as a sailor how the Government can allow any ships flying the British flag to go to sea entirely unarmed. There are a few instances in which a gun has been mounted in the stern, but it is an insult to the men to ask them to fight with the sterns of their ships towards the enemy. These men should be provided not only with big guns fore and aft, but every ship should be fitted with depth charges (mines), of which the Germans have a perfect horror. If they were armed in this way the sailors could then go at the enemy, and have a chance of dealing with him effectively. At present, whenever they have an opportunity of fighting, they have to do it while running away!"

Yet in 1939 we found the same state of things.

## CHAPTER XVI

### IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS

AFTER THE WAR I TURNED FOR A TIME TO POLITICS. MY experiences as a Parliamentary candidate were interesting, sometimes boisterous, but I did not win a passport to the House of Commons. I can claim, however, to have lived, so to speak, on the fringes of Parliamentary life.

In my family chapter I tell the story of my grandfather, Lord Charles James Fox Russell, M.P., who was Sergeant-at Arms in the House of Commons, and how I lived as a boy at his official quarters there. I formed a close friendship with Mr. Percy Thornton, who was M.P. for Clapham for many years and who frequently invited me to the House where, in the Strangers' Gallery, I listened to many debates. He and his wife (who resembled Queen Victoria in appearance and was most lovable) allowed me to use their beautiful old house, named Battersea Rise, on the edge of Clapham Common, almost as my own. This house, which has long gone, had famous associations. Among those who had lived there were the younger Pitt, Wilberforce, who fought for slave emancipation, Lord Macaulay and Lord Houghton, father of Lord Crewe, and there the evangelical body known as the Clapham Sect used to 'assemble and meet together'.

I had what I may call false starts as a Parliamentary candidate. Early in 1918 I became prospective Conservative candidate for Central Hackney, but owing to my appointment as Chief of Staff at Buncrana I had reluctantly to give up this candidature. Just before the war ended I was adopted by the local Executive Council as prospective Conservative candidate for Wolverhampton, but



Digitized by Google

there was a hitch due to the intervention of Conservative headquarters, who had already selected a candidate, and I resigned the position. Then I accepted an invitation to become Conservative candidate for Great Yarmouth and I nursed that constituency for a time. There I had a unique experience in friendship. Mr. Harbord, now Sir Arthur Harbord, M.P., who was the Liberal candidate, treated me, his political opponent, with marked kindness, even asking me to luncheons to meet his own people. Eventually I resigned my candidature as I disliked the idea of opposing such an excellent man, and there was little or no difference in our fundamental political ideas.

About this time, shortly after the war ended, Lord Rothermere was trying to get candidates to fight under his 'Anti-waste' banner, and I agreed to be one of these. He realized the enormous amount of money that was being then wasted, especially on Mesopotamia. He telegraphed me asking if I would contest Westminster where a by-election, caused by the death of Mr. Burdett-Coutts, was impending. I declined for various reasons, including the fact that the late member had been a very great friend of my wife, but I felt honoured in having been invited by Lord Rothermere, who had done so much for aviation, to contest the seat. I regarded Lord Rothermere—with whom I had many long talks—as a leader, far-sighted and with very clear and decided views. In his efforts to stimulate interest in the subject he wrote to everyone who ought to have been interested, including Ministers. Let me emphasize again how Lord Rothermere (and those associated with him) have been vindicated by events.

I agreed to fight as 'Anti-waste' candidate in the next by-election, and soon I was contesting West Lewisham, a division made vacant by the death of Major Sir Edward Coates.

I had an exciting time and thoroughly enjoyed it. My wife and I rented a house near the election office, and we got enormous support from all sides, including many leading local Liberals. My wife always told me not to speak too long; so I had a rope attached to my leg and passed behind the Chairman to my wife, sitting on his left on the platform. She pulled the rope when she thought I had spoken long enough—much to the amusement of the audiences.

A certain lady used to follow me from meeting to meeting, asking various questions. One was whether the candidate would support a Bill which was being put forward at that time to give extra milk to expectant mothers. I told the lady I knew nothing about that kind of thing but that I would consult my wife. The audience roared.

Some of my supporters got up an amusing show. They produced a haycart, a horse and two professional fighters, turning



Digitized by Google

the cart into a boxing ring, with the boxers seated in the corners, with their 'seconds', towels, sponges, and so forth. The contestants were duly introduced to the crowd, the announcer saying, "On my right, gentlemen, is Windham—on my left, Dawson"—the name of my opponent. "Both heavyweights," he added, "and good fighters." The chairs were removed and the fight began. It was a severe one and caused considerable excitement among the crowd. By pre-arrangement the final knock-out blow was delivered by 'Windham', and 'Dawson' fell off the cart on to the horse's back. The horse was then made to move through the crowd, my opponent still sprawling on its back. My opponent had arranged a big meeting nearby, but the boxing spectacle drew away all his audience to see it. This caused great fun on both sides.

Several motor-lorries which were lent me I had packed full with children, who were driven about over the constituency waving small flags and shouting themselves hoarse. Nearly every child in the place came and stood outside the 'Anti-Waste' offices in order to get a ride in the lorries, and naturally this led their parents to take an interest in my election. From a menagerie in the locality we borrowed a camel which we paraded in the streets with placards on either side of its body bearing the words, "I've got the hump but Windham hasn't!" We also had a loud-speaker van, said to have been probably the first to be put in the streets.

My Election Address (too long for insertion at length) concluded as follows:

> Finally, my sole wish is to represent the Electors of West Lewisham in the House of Commons—and to point out to the Government, through your vote, that they MUST NOW cut off expenditure and Squandermania in CHUNKS OF MILLIONS, no matter how it hurts, in order that you and I may live, that our industries may thrive, that our rates and taxes may be reduced, that pensions may not be jeopardized, that England may be the England which our boys died for instead of a bankrupt, dissatisfied, discontented, out-of-work, out-of-pocket, impoverished and sick country—all because there is no money, no heart to work, no work to do, and the country rushing over the brink into insolvency and plunging headlong into the abyss of Bankruptcy.
>
> Work with me. Help, counsel and advise me. I want your help and advice to try and straighten things up, fighting, not under a Party Whip, but by my knowledge of OUR country's need, and if I am returned as your representative, I shall, as I have promised in public, visit the constituency at frequent intervals to give an account of my stewardship.

Standing as a candidate brings one in touch with all types of people, especially the working classes, which on shore are rightly



Digitized by Google

described as the 'Backbone of the Nation', but in nautical language would be called the 'Heart yarns of the main brace'.

I lost the election by a few hundred votes, but considering the enormous electorate, and that my opponent—who resided in the constituency—had nursed it for several years, one could actually claim a victory for 'Anti-Waste'. Lord Rothermere, when the election was over, wrote and congratulated me on the fight I put up, and very kindly enclosed a cheque for £1,000 towards my expenses. This money I returned saying I had only done my duty, and what I thought was best for my country, but Lord Rothermere again sent the cheque, asking me as a great favour to accept it for the work I had done in helping him and his cause.

The result of the election was so unpopular among many that Sir Philip Dawson, after the poll was declared, had to take refuge in the local Conservative Club till the early hours of the following morning. Crowds were booing and hissing outside the building and his head was struck and injured with a stick. The police seemed to have no control over the crowd and the streets were so thickly jammed with people that the trams ran with difficulty.

I did not fight this constituency again although I felt absolutely certain that I could have captured it. At the General Election, which followed very shortly afterwards, I gave all my support to Sir Philip Dawson, at the request of Headquarters, and he was put in by one of the biggest majorities known in the London elections.

In 1933 the Labour Party in Brecon and Radnor did me the honour of asking me to stand as their Labour Candidate, but I refused, although I was a great sympathizer with their Party.

Personally I liked Mr. Lloyd George very much and knew him fairly well, having stayed in the same hotel with him at Monte Carlo as guest of Sir Robert Hadfield. When Mr. Lloyd George was attacked by Suffragettes in South Kensington station, I went to his rescue and he expressed his gratitude. I did not agree with his Overseas policy after the last war, especially in Mesopotamia, and thought at the time he ought to have looked after the 'Mess-up-at home-here'. This was the reason I joined with Lord Rothermere, leaving the Conservative Party for a time.

I am quite certain that Lord Rothermere through his Anti-waste policy, at the time, was the chief instrument in knocking Lloyd George off his political pedestal. I believe, however, that if he had remained in power this country would not have got into the awful state of armament neglect due to Lord Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald—or MacDonald and Baldwin. It was they who brought the country into a state of chaos by their wanton neglect and refusal to listen to others in political life, or, in fact, to anyone,



Digitized by Google

and by appointing the wrong people as the heads of many Government Departments, especially the Air.

Speaking of Mr. Lloyd George, I must say that he did much less than justice to Neville Chamberlain, and I took occasion to point this out in August, 1939, a few weeks before the war began. I was present at that time at a gathering in Llandrindod Wells which Mr. Lloyd George addressed, and in a letter which I sent to the Press afterwards I stated that I was not impressed by his speech as a whole although I agreed with the part relating to the need for more home-produced cereals in case of war. The speech for the most part, as I wrote, consisted of a conglomeration of abuse of Mr. Chamberlain, comparing his work with 'Charlie's Aunt'—still running. I went on to say:

Mr. Chamberlain to my mind has successfully cleared up some of the biggest messes that any country has ever been in—left by the Baldwin Government. Why didn't Mr. Lloyd George put the blame on the right shoulders and not meander round these potent facts? . . . When Mr. Chamberlain flew to Munich this country was, in comparison with the enemy's, in a rotten state as far as the air was concerned. . . . Do people sufficiently realize the fact that every Member of the House of Commons, including Mr. Lloyd George, knew only too well what Mr. Chamberlain's mission was when he flew to Munich? Yet not a word was uttered, but when he returned people like Duff Cooper came out of their dens like a roaring lion, retiring from office—a despicable action. If Lord Baldwin and Lord Swinton had listened to Lord Nuffield in 1935 when he indicated the state of our air defences and if they had allowed him to act, also to Lord Rothermere, there would have been no trouble or even talk of war. . . .

Lord Castlerosse wrote of Lord Baldwin:

Now, children, the time has come for our history lesson. These studies are all important, otherwise we may not know what mistakes to make in the future.

Lest you find flippancy in these remarks I would draw your attention to the case of Lord Baldwin, who, during his period of Premiership, made more disastrous errors than any preceding British Prime Minister, and yet he was much revered and voted for.

Indeed, if he had only died a few years ago the nation would have wept at his loss.

The reason for this man's singular success was that he had an odd instinct in selecting his mistakes, and it is my belief that the hand of history guided him, for he was a considerable reader of the records of the past as they are written.

At the same time, one must give Lord Baldwin credit for the way



Digitized by Google

in which he handled the Abdication of King Edward VIII to the satisfaction of most people.

I am positive that there never would have been any war, or probably any threat of war, had Lord Nuffield been allowed to control the Shadow Factories Scheme for the building of aeroplanes. As a great business man and wonderful organizer he saw clearly the danger to the country so far as the aeroplane—or the want of it—was concerned. He offered his full services to put matters right, and these were ignominiously turned down. It may be recalled that Lord Nuffield said to Lord Swinton, who was Air Minister at the time, "God help you in time of war," and walked out of the Shadow Factory Scheme. Where should we have been if we had not got machines from oversea? The country, to my way of thinking, owes an enormous debt to Sir Kingsley Wood for his work at the Air Ministry. Lord Baldwin may well go down in history as one of the worst Prime Ministers we have ever had; this view has been freely expressed by many. The safety of his country is the supreme trust reposed in a Prime Minister.

Arising out of my contact with working men at the Lewisham election I was asked to start a working man's club at Forest Hill. This appealed strongly to me and I got the scheme going at once with the help of Mr. C. Jones, who was the life and soul of the club and of Lewisham. The club proved such a success that we extended the enterprise to Fleet Street, where we had a big place. At the opening of this City Club, Lord Allenby, who was present as chairman, said it was the type of working man's club which should be instituted in every town in England. For my part in this enterprise, after the club had been run successfully for several years, I was made a Freeman of the City of London under Seal of a small Parchment bearing the words, *Domine Dirige Nos.*

London To Wit — Sir Walter George Windham, Knt., of 25, Berkeley Square, Mayfair, Westminster, Commander Royal Indian Marine, retired, and a Citizen of London, was admitted into the Freedom aforesaid and made the Declaration required by Law in the Mayoralty of Sir Percy Walter Greenaway, Knt., Mayor and Sir Adrian Donald Wilde Pollock, Knt., Chamberlain.

The 11th day of November in the 23rd Year of the reign of King George V. And in the Year of Our Lord 1932, IN WITNESS whereof the Seal of the Office of Chamberlain of the said City is hereunto affixed Dated in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the same City the day and year above said.

Ten minutes after I had been made a Freeman I asked for the



Digitized by Google

use of a room at Guidhall for a meeting of the Oxford Group, a request which was readily granted.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TRAINING OF THE DOG

I TURN FROM WAR AND ITS IMPLEMENTS TO THE PEACE OF THE countryside and to that faithful friend of man, the dog. My special fondness for the sporting dog prompted me to suggest in *The Field* certain improvements in the field trials of these animals. I wished each dog to have an equal chance in the trials and that the standard of training should be higher.

A properly trained dog, I submitted, should at least be able to:

1. Retrieve game from water (a ball may be used);
2. Sit and remain sitting while the trainer walks away;
3. Jump a fence at least 3 ft. high, carrying a bird or rabbit in its mouth;
4. Go 'over' or through a fence when directed;
5. Come back instantly to the whistle, whether hunting or not;
6. Walk properly to heel (a very important point in these days of motors);
7. Lift a snipe;
8. Travel in a car without being sick (an awful habit);
9. Deliver game properly, with its head right up, and sitting erect; and
10. Find game in thick undergrowth or thorns and bushes and deliver it.

The swimming test should be made compulsory. The dog should readily enter cold or warm water without persuasion, he should swim left or right by direction of the hand, cross to the other side and work ahead. He should deliver the game before shaking himself, as so many dogs put their game down to do this. Points should be given for fast or slow swimmers.

I was agreeably surprised at the favourable response to my suggestions. The *Shooting Times* took up the matter and promoted a Field Trials Association and I was honoured by an invitation, which I accepted, to be its President. If war had not happened and had this Association been able to pursue its work I am sure much would have been done towards the efficiency of the sporting dog.

Two very satisfactory pre-war trials were held under the



Digitized by Google

conditions outlined—one at the Witley Park Estate (Surrey) of Sir John Leigh, M.P., the other at Lord Aylesford's estate near Market Harborough. After these trials the Committee received many appreciative letters.

As an example of what I was trying to achieve, I may mention that about this time I was shooting at Burton Park, Petworth, when a pheasant fell a distance from the shore of a lake and dropped on the ice. There were several dogs, and everyone tried to induce his dog to retrieve the bird, but each turned back after almost reaching it. Two of the dogs, I was told, were well-known winners at Field Trials. Then came the Head Keeper with his spaniel, which won the first prize at the *Shooting Times* Field Trials. This dog immediately jumped into the water, broke the ice with its paws, and retrieved the bird, much to the admiration of us all.

I considered that certain questions should be asked of would-be entrants for field trials, these to include:

Is your dog free from all disease?
Does he have fits or hysteria?
Will he retrieve 'at the gallop'?
Will he lift a bird over a 3-ft. fence?
Will he retrieve a snipe or woodcock?
Will he drop to hand and remain there while his owner walks away?
Will he enter cold water and retrieve to hand?
Will he face thick undergrowth?
Is he absolutely steady under all conditions?

These questions were designed to eliminate the bad dogs, and save the judges the trouble of judging animals which were really of no use.

War will intrude, even into the pleasant subject of dogs. In May, 1941, the War Office appealed for the loan of dogs for sentry work. I had written to the War Office in 1939 suggesting the use of the dog for this purpose. I pointed out that, owing to the animals' acute hearing, no sentry could be surprised if he had a dog as his helper, that canine ears would detect sooner than human ears the approach of a possible enemy boat, and that the dog would be otherwise a good companion on a lonely vigil. Another point which I emphasized was that, like the sentry himself, the dog must not be sheltered while on duty but be out and on the alert. I was pleased to learn that my suggestion had found official acceptance.

May I recall the story of a notorious house-breaker who was asked whether a dog had ever barked, in his experience, when he broke into a house, and whose answer was in the negative (except for a small Yorkshire terrier which yapped all the time he was doing



Digitized by Google

his burglary even after a cushion had been thrown at it). If my recollection is correct, Lord Lonsdale (who had bought dogs for house watching from a man who trained for that purpose), whose house had been burgled, wrote to the burglar, then in prison, asking how the dogs had behaved. The answer was that the dogs remained quiet. I have myself tested dogs by tapping windows after their master had gone to bed. The dogs seems to feel that when master goes to sleep he can do likewise. The dog can be taught almost everything but he must always be with his master. The ordinary mongrel sheep-dog has far more sense than a so-called trained retriever because he is always with his master whereas the retriever is only occasionally with his keeper.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### 'WRINKLES' ON SALMON FISHING

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF ADDING TO THE LONG LIST OF BOOKS written (especially on the fly and bait) about salmon fishing, but I think my autobiography would be incomplete if I did not include some of my experiences of this sport which I have enjoyed over thirty years in different parts of the world. Some of what I call my 'wrinkles' will no doubt be new to those readers who are salmon fishers and others as old as sin. There will be conflicting opinions, since I have found that every fisherman has his own ideas about catching salmon, and that, so far as that sport is concerned, every river and pool and every month has its own peculiarities. This is probably all to the good; if there was an orthodox and universally successful way of catching salmon there would soon be few left. With apologies to the experienced angler for my repetition of what he already knows I give this chapter as a sort of *multum in parvo* to help the amateur.

Much that has been written about and practised in fishing is, to put it plainly, absurd. For example, some fishing casts are made as long as six feet because, as is said, the fish otherwise would see the line and so forth and possibly would not take. Then there are the artificial baits, with big hooks, churning round like a ship's propeller, at the tail of the minnow, or with swivels at the head and above that, at a distance of about two-and-a-half to three feet, big pieces of lead and flanges, or an imitation prawn or minnow. These are made and painted to represent the live thing—even the eyes of the minnow are often painted in—but since these revolve



Digitized by Google

hundreds of times a minute it is impossible for the salmon to see any of the markings upon it.

Experience showed me that sea trout at least recognize the smallest difference in a fly. When I was stationed in Buncrana in the latter part of the last war I went, with the Admiral's permission, to fish the Crana river. I fished for two or three hours without getting a pull, although the white trout were rising to the natural fly all over the place.

I was returning home when I met an Irishman with fishing-rod who asked me if I had had any luck. When I told him my experience he said, "Why is that? Come along and let us have another go." He told me that my cast was too heavy and my fly not the right sort, and he insisted on me taking one of his own flies. I started to fish again but was no more successful than before although my companion caught several nice trout. While sitting by his side eating my lunch, I saw his cast and fly and said, "Excuse me saying so, but this is not quite the same fly as the one you gave me." He said, "It must be," and, producing his envelope, showed me the flies which he said were all the same, but he nevertheless selected another. On closely examining the original fly, I noticed it had not quite the same hackle as the one with which he had caught his fish. The hackle was slightly lighter, but the difference was so slight that I thought it could hardly be the reason why I did not get a rise. However, when lunch was finished, I wandered down to the same place where I had been fishing and by the time we met again I had caught almost as many fish as my companion. Here we were, both fishing the same water at the same time on the same day with the same cast and the same fly except for this very minute difference.

Another incident made me think the same thing applies to salmon. I was fishing at the invitation of Prince Ranjitsinjhi at Ballynahinch on the West coast of Ireland, where he had taken the Castle, and had noticed in one of the pools a salmon continually rising in the same place. After trying several flies I had completely failed to catch it and told one of the staff about it. He got permission to fish the pool and next morning he told me he had caught the fish. The Maharajah had given him a box of flies containing fifty to a hundred different sorts, and he told me he had tried every fly up to about thirty until he had chosen the right one. He said, "I am not a fisherman but I know, in this part of the world at any rate, they take what they want and nothing else." All the flies were nearly the same size but of different patterns.

On the other hand, the late Mr. A. J. Wood of Cairnton in Scotland, the well-known exponent of the greased floating line theory, seldom varied the pattern of his fly but believed in the 'Blue



Digitized by Google

Charm' and used it with very great success nearly all the time. I looked in his box of flies and noticed one which had hardly any hackle or wing, and only a worn-out body, and he said "On that one I have caught most of my fish." But I doubt if you or I, using the same method, would have had half his success. He was well known all over the world through his books on the art of the greased line theory, which bears out the idea that salmon will take a definite sort of fly if presented to them in the right way. He caught far more fish than anyone else on the Dee.

Mr. Wood was, in fact, a pastmaster of fishing, and, as far as I can judge, beat everyone else at anything and everything he took up. I ought to relate a little of what I know about this remarkable man. He seldom took anything for granted or adopted anything anyone said, but used his own brain and *savoir faire* to guide him in whatever he did. My brother said, after meeting him, "If we had more people like that in the House of Commons, there would be no trouble in this country."

It is stated that he built a sort of glass room on the river bed and got someone to fish with fly and bait so that he could see how and why the fish took it and he learnt in this way a good deal of the ways of the salmon. He could tell, for example, in what part of the mouth a fish was hooked, and was almost invariably right. He would catch fish in the backwater of a dead pool, which I never heard or knew of anyone else being able to do except perhaps with a worm. He would not allow any dogs on the bank because he said they distracted the fish.

Each of his rods and its parts, together with the reel, had some distinguishing mark—red, white or blue, etc.—to enable them to be quickly and correctly assembled. His rods were very carefully selected. I noticed about a dozen in his room and asked him what they were for. He said they had been sent by different makers for his selection as he wanted a perfectly balanced one and would accept nothing else. One peculiarity about his fishing was that he never pulled on the line but allowed the fish to hook itself.

He could tell the height of the water in the river when he woke up in the morning because he had a gauge in his bedroom, and he had charts giving every detail concerning the catching of a salmon. As far as I know he always used the fly and not the bait.

People tell me he was a wonderful shot and thoroughly studied the angles at which one should shoot; he became such an expert that he lost interest in it. He then took up yacht sailing and won so many prizes that he lost interest in this sport also. Then he went in for bee-keeping and I remember him showing me a small turn-stile which registered the entry and exit of each bee into and from



Digitized by Google

M. CODY OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.
(Photographed by Sir Benjamin Stone)

Digitized by Google

MY BIPLANE AT ALLAHABAD WITH THE PILOT AND MYSELF IN PICTURE.

Digitized by Google

its hive. He could tell, at any hour of the day, how much honey had been put in because the hive was balanced on a scale.

While in his garden I noticed workmen pulling a huge rock, which must have weighed many tons. He said, "That is for my rock garden as I believe in having rocks and not stones." At that time he had no wireless set, but later I heard that he had one of the biggest and best sets in Scotland.

He had all sorts of ideas and tricks in his house; for instance, when he walked towards a certain room he could, by treading on a button, open or close the door.

Now a word about those essentials for fishing—rod and gear. Every angler would be well advised to equip himself with at least two rods, adapting the rod to the size and height of the river to be fished. The big rod, for long casting, should be fitted with a suitable reel, line, cast and fly, the smaller with a lesser reel, line, cast and fly. I find it is useless to use a big fly on a light cast or *vice versa*, as they won't work together. As to a spinning rod, one about seven feet in length is best, and it should be comparatively light, as the fish is not so likely to break a light line and cast as it would a heavy or stiff rod which offers no flexibility. One should get far more sport in landing a fish with a light than with a heavy rod. My advice to the amateur or beginner is to go to a reliable friend who understands about salmon fishing and ask him to choose the different things required, such as rods, reels, lines and tackle for fly- and bait-spinning.

Waders should be light, fitted with braces of the same material and at least a size bigger than one's boots to allow for warm socks to be worn in cold weather. The fabric should be soft and pliable, not stiff, and should be reinforced at knees and feet. A small temporary repair in a wader can, at a pinch, be made by melting a piece of cobbler's wax with a match and rubbing it into the hole on both sides. Cobbler's wax is a very useful thing to carry in one's bag, as it has many uses. Bigger patches can easily be stuck on by using the fabric of an old wader, first roughing both parts with a wire brush, then applying at least two or three coverings of solution, allowing each one five minutes to dry. Do not put the solution on with the fingers, but smear it on from left to right or *vice versa* with an old kitchen knife, which I find works extremely well. This tip was given me by an employee of Cording's when I told him of an improvement which I had thought out and applied to my own wading trousers, namely, to have the cord for tightening them on either the right or left side and not in the centre since the cord there is likely to interfere with the butt of the rod when casting or possibly to get mixed up with the reel when you have a fish on. He was so pleased with this idea that he gave me in return the



Digitized by Google

tip for mending a hole. Personally I think all lines and casts should be tapered. The lines are sometimes made with a long taper on one end and a short taper on the other. The long part should be fastened to the reel and the shorter part of the taper to the cast. When buying a spinning reel, choose one with pear-shaped handles. They are easier to manipulate.

A very useful gadget, which I use on all forms of fishing-rods, is an umbrella ring which fits over the butt above the reel. It can be rolled over any hook and rolled off, and it is especially useful for a flight of hooks since it prevents them getting adrift from the rod. When it is raining, push the ring up the rod since it helps to prevent the water running down the butt on to your hands.

If you buy an aluminium salmon-fly case, choose one at least one inch thick as they are apt to bend and get out of order and will not take a double hook. As a whole they are not satisfactory except in small sizes, and I do not recommend them.

Reels of trace wire can be bought in strong, medium and fine sizes. After purchase, dip the whole thing in oil, then put into a tin box to prevent any wet getting to it. The slightest spot of rust and the wire will break. Most people buy medium size, but personally I cannot see why the stronger wire is not used. Should a salmon take a cast round a stone, for instance, it is very apt to break the medium strength. Also it is more liable to kink.

When using wire, care should be taken as to how it is twisted or it will slip. The ends should be pushed through the swivel and widely crossed between the first finger and thumb of one hand. Keep holding firmly in this position and twist the whole thing with the other hand. This ensures that *both* parts are twisted round each other and not only one part. Cut the wire neatly off, leaving a little bit sticking out which will prevent the bait from returning if the salmon should spit the bait up the trace, which he invariably does—why and how I do not know. This method will prevent the salmon getting a lever on the bait.

Flat-nosed pincers are the best for cutting wire, etc. Whip a loop on one handle and tie it to your buttonhole, or better still, to your fishing-bag, and it wont get lost. Rub them well in oil or good vaseline as they are very apt to get rusty and so blunted.

Mottram, in his book, says it is the rod and not the man which frightens the fish. I agree, and therefore believe in the horizontal cast, always using as short a rod as possible to prevent the salmon seeing it. Some of the McCorquodale family used this type of cast, and it is recorded that Mr. G. F. McCorquodale caught 8,924 salmon in the Spey between 1891 and 1935. If the bait or fly gets hung up, pay out some twenty or thirty yards of line, then give a sudden jerk, which usually releases the hook. When pulling



Digitized by Google

on a line to clear a hook, turn the rod and reel uppermost; this prevents undue strain on the point of the rod.

When travelling to a tropical country and the weather is hot, hand your lines, etc., to the purser of the ship to keep in the refrigerator or you may find them so sticky as to be useless. Gut casts and points should be kept between chamois leather, in the dark and not in the light. A useful thing for soaking casts is the glass jar in which tongue is generally sold and which is about the same size as the cast when bought. A sticky oilskin should be lightly sprinkled with ordinary powdered lime, rubbed well in. This tip came from personal experience and I should say it is a new one. All swivels should be ground in with oil and emery dust, as used for grinding in the valve of a car, and it should be done in the same way. This is my own tip and it works; I have not before seen this mentioned in print. I would advise a medium size, such as Hardy's No. 6, as it will pass through the bait. I do not think a salmon cares what size it is; it is so used to seeing bits coming down the river that I do not think it is sufficiently wise to know whether it is a swivel or piece of foreign matter. Using a very small swivel is, I think, more of a fad than anything. The small-eyed swivel is only suitable for wire as it will not take a thick line or a line doubled.

The best traces, I consider, are those made of cable or twisted wire with a swivel in the centre. One end should be fitted with a spring clip device or split ring, for attaching it to the bait. Use cocktail sticks or hairpins to keep prawns straight when preserving them in a bottle. After boiling them thus mounted they can be got out of the bottle easily.

When fastening a line to a swivel why not make a single slip knot? It can then be so easily detached.

Casts are very easy to tie oneself. Soak the strands of gut—which can be bought in different lengths and sizes—for several hours and fasten with a 'blood' or 'cushion' knot. Both are equally efficient and easily tied. The casts then cost less than half you can buy them for. Nearly all are tied with the 'blood' knot—the invention of a sailor. After hooking a fish hold the rod nearly vertical. Let the top of the rod do the work and not you.

Fuse wire is excellent for binding a prawn, golden sprat, gudgeon, etc., to a hook. It can be bought at Woolworths. Most fishermen use fine copper wire to fasten a prawn to a hook. Personally I find it not only cuts through the scales but gets slack, so I prefer the above or fine flower wire as used by florists. Wind a piece of each spirally round your finger and you will see what I mean. The copper wire is apt to spring off.

A good adage is 'always keep your hooks sharp', especially after touching a rock, which is apt to blunt the point. Use a



Digitized by Google

carburundum stone to sharpen. A little hand vice is sold for holding, otherwise it is difficult to do. Unless the hooks are absolutely sharp the fish may get off. This applies to both fly and bait. The hook needs constant care. A golden rule which applies to everyone who uses a spinning rod should be the constant testing of the line. Personally I find it will not break when dry but invariably breaks when wet. The part affected is about three-quarters of a yard above the bait.

Sometimes it is difficult to tell if the fly is still on the cast or not, but with a fair-sized hook one can usually feel it by pulling the hook sharply out of the water.

Some fish lie on the bottom in a deep pool. Mr. Crosfield—the celebrated Wye fisherman—told me he used split shot on his fly cast in order to get down to them. Fish nearly always lie on the bed of a river or behind a rock. One has only to watch salmon being caught off Galway Bridge—a sight worth seeing—to realize that they are lazy and want a lot of coaxing to bring them to the surface.

At certain seasons of the year, when the water gets low, salmon refuse the fly and bait and, although I personally do not use it, the worm under these conditions is the most attractive bait to a salmon. I knew someone who was an absolute expert in this art of fishing and my family gave him the nickname Baron de Worms. He would catch fish by this means when everything else failed. Worm fishing, as he told me, is an art in itself and can only be used on a sandy bottom. Worms can be caught by going out at night with a spotlight and pouncing on them as they are very quick and slip backwards into their holes. They can be dislodged by pouring salt and water on them, which will bring them to the surface.

Do not use brogues fitted with heavy nails as sold by the fishing shops. Those I use have thick felt soles with alpine case-hardened nails fixed to the heel in leather. They are silent in the pools and do not slip. I am convinced that fish can feel vibrations transmitted through water. Their senses in this matter are very acute. When going over the feeding-grounds in Kashmir I asked the man in charge to walk barefoot towards where he fed the fish. He did so, and to my astonishment some hundreds of feet before he got to the place the fish heard his footsteps and came to the surface expecting to be fed. Therefore one should walk quietly on the banks of a river when approaching a pool as any unusual noise disturbs the fish. Mr. J. Mottram says, "Fish take no notice of singing, whistling, shouting, etc., but tap the ground gently with hand or foot and the fish is at once frightened. On one occasion I hired a fishing in Scotland, the water being vacant because the previous lessee failed to catch a fish. When I got in the boat the iron rowlocks made such a noise that I asked the ghillie to fit them with rubber. After



Digitized by Google

this we caught quite a number of fish." Rubber mats laid on the floor of the boat are a good idea to prevent noises and vibrations. The rowlocks and oars should both be fastened to the boat. This is most important, especially in a fast-running river, where an oar may accidentally go overboard and may not be easily recovered.

When fishing a fast pool with a boat, a wooden block with a roller should be fitted for hanging a stone or weight at least a foot beyond the bow of the boat, thus enabling one to pull the weight up to the bow clear of the water instead of lifting the weight into the boat. A rope can be used for lowering the boat. Above the roller fit an iron pin, which will prevent the rope from getting out of its place.

I find, after many years experience, that ordinary tar varnish as sold in shops is one of the best things for preserving a boat. The next best thing is ordinary tar—which one gets at the gas works, but if this is too thick it does not dry unless mixed with equal parts of Stockholm tar, and applied lightly as it is apt to get on oars, clothes and hands.

Should you break the top ring of your rod, I have found a suitable temporary substitute may be made by using the upper part of a safety-pin (cutting off the bottom) and whipping the sides to the rod.

If you are not used to spinning, use an American South Bend reel which automatically prevents an over-run. The same applies to the British Easicast Reel. Both of these, when once adjusted, work automatically. To clear a fouled hook I specially recommend an 'otter', which will clear most baits. Another idea is to clip a lead on to the line and allow it to run down to the bait, but the ring of the lead must be small enough to prevent it passing over the hook. If the joints of a rod stick, try heating the ferrule with a match. Fly books should be wrapped up in paper to prevent the moth getting into them. When using brogues, make sure the laces are properly tied and cannot come adrift. Also see they are fitted with big eyelets and not hooks.

Always carry a wire cutter in case you should get the barb into your flesh. Should you have this misfortune, push the hook through until the barb is clear of the flesh, then cut away the barb and pull it backwards.

To gaff a fish do not jab at it but strike the fish in a circle, as this is bound to hook it.

When sending a fish by rail, take the entrails out, thoroughly clean and put a branch of bay leaf or mint in its inside—barring these, nettles will do. It keeps the fish sweet in hot weather. Sew them up in canvas cloth or use reeds as they do in Ireland.



Digitized by Google

The following questions are a guide to the inquiries which should be made when hiring or purchasing a stretch of river:

Has the water one or two banks? The law, if you have only one bank, is that the water is yours to the centre of the river; but as it is difficult to determine what *is* the centre, the unwritten law used by fishermen is that you must not turn your back to the opposite bank.

Has one the right of way along the river, also to the road, etc?

Are you offered the sole right to fish? If not, who else has the right?

Bags for the last three years should be provided, with the average weight of fish and dates of catches.

Is the water liable to much discoloration?

If one bank only is taken, ascertain what arrangements (if any) are made about fishing the pools. Also whether your opposite number cares what bait is used.

If a boat is used, find out if it is in good order.

Is a ghillie provided? If so, who pays his wages and how much?

Ascertain the number of pools; also, if it is a trout river, when it was last re-stocked, and the size and number put in.

How many rods can fish the water under ordinary conditions?

How long is the stretch of water, and is it chiefly wading or boat?

Are the banks wooded or clear? An inspection of this would be advisable. If you contemplate trout-fishing, the question of weed-cutting should be gone into, as on a river like the Test, for example, it is a perfect nuisance if weed-cutting takes place on different days.

Are there any taxes, licences, etc., and what are they?

What accommodation is there and where is it relative to the river? How is it reached? By car or walking?

Obtain the names and addresses of the last two lessees. To satisfy yourself and to save disappointment, send a list of questions you would like to ask.

Salmon rivers vary—each has its own close time. Find out the dates for opening and closing.

If you should catch a poacher fishing in your river do not take his rod and gear away or you cannot convict him of poaching. A case occurred to me in which, the ghillie having taken the rod and reel from the man, the Court could convict the poacher only of fishing without a licence.

Many think it is only necessary to buy a hardy rod and reel and lumber into a pool in order to catch a fish—forgetting that salmon are not in a huge ocean but in a confined space. Who would expect to shoot a rabbit by just walking out with a 'Purdy' and not stalking it? Yet the salmon is looked upon as having no instincts or fear.



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XIX

## SHETLAND AND THE SHETLANDERS

I KNEW THE SHETLAND ISLANDS NOT ONLY IN WAR-TIME BUT IN peace-time, and I shall always cherish happy memories of them. Many years before the first great war I went there on a shooting expedition with a cousin and we stayed at a farm house in a district the name of which I must not mention because of the egg-hunters. I am fond of birds and when I heard that the red-necked phalarope built its nest in the marshes in the neighbourhood I was eager to see its nest and eggs; but my search was in vain. These birds, which are of the snipe species, are found in some parts of the Shetlands but they are very rare.

The Shetlanders, who are a most delightful people, are chiefly of Norwegian extraction; they are most adaptable and well able to look after themselves. But somewhat haphazard ways go with their charm. My cousin, going into the kitchen of the farmhouse one day, noticed that our wet socks had been hung on the edge of the soup tureen to dry. He asked me to speak to the old lady about this, but I rather jibbed, knowing she would take it to heart; so we tossed who should do it and, of course, I lost. I went to her and said: "Look here, Mrs. A——, my cousin noticed where you dried our socks and we do not like it." She sobbed and said: "Things are so different since my poor husband died. Now I can never seem to be able to do anything right." That is exactly what I thought would happen. Nevertheless, she, like all widows, had something to rejoice about, as at least they know where their husbands are. Not only the incident of the socks bothered us but the house itself was generally very untidy. What they appeared to consider clean we would call dirty.

After this, we shifted to an hotel more in the centre of the island to get better all-round sport. In the hotel was one of the staff of *The Field* who was there to report on the sport of the island and at the same time enjoy his holiday. He was always talking about rabbits, so we played a trick on him to give him something to report to his paper. In the evening I shot a rabbit, stuffed it with straw and propped it up in a place I knew we should pass next morning. As we passed it, I said, "Go easy; look! there's a rabbit. Sneak round and shoot it." Off went the gentleman's gun—but the rabbit was still there. Running up, we shouted to him: "Hurry, or you will lose it." When he found it was a stuffed rabbit there was a good deal of fun and chaff.

At the end of 1914 I found myself again in the Shetland Islands



Digitized by Google

for recruiting and to report on enemy submarines passing through that area. For these purposes I had charge of the whole of the Islands and, incidentally, I was provided with two ordinary field guns. I got to know the Islands very well; in fact, I knew many places even better than the natives, who, for want of transport, seldom left their own districts except, perhaps, to go occasionally on the mail steamer to Lerwick. Sir Arthur Nicholson, Bt., who owned the Fetla Island on the east coast a few miles from the mainland, had a certain amount of property which he had never seen, and he used to ask me about it. Unless my memory deceives me, it was Sir Arthur who told me that one of his jobs had been to hunt down and capture, in Australia, the notorious bandit, Ned Kelly. Those who have not read *The Life of Ned Kelly* should certainly make a point of doing so. Frank Bolderwood, a well-known Australian author, refers to this extraordinary character in his book *Robbery under Arms*. An Australian lady whom I met in London told me she had met Ned Kelly when she was young. He suddenly appeared on her father's ranch and shouting "Hands up!" demanded that all money and jewellery should be handed over. She reluctantly gave up a watch that had belonged to her grandmother and which she valued very much, expressing a wish, as she handed it to Kelly, that he would not take it. Many months afterwards the watch was returned to her. He asked her, as daughter of the house, to make him a cup of coffee, and when she brought it he told her to drink some of it, apparently because there was a big reward on his head dead or alive. Then the whole family was ordered to go with him to where his horse was tethered, and, jumping on it, he made off into the night.

He used to live in a hut in the woods, which I saw, and when the mails were due to pass he would place trunks of trees across the road, and so hold up the coach and rob the passengers. He would enter a church when the congregation was there, hold them up at pistol point. Eventually he was shot between the armour plating protecting his legs. A friend of mine who was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs told me that he used always to carry three books with him wherever he went—the Bible, Shakespeare, and *Robbery under Arms*.

When I was in the Shetlands in 1914 there were only a few motor-cars there and very little was known about them. I had a small horse-power single-engine Morgan three-wheeler which I used to cart about from one island to another. The men used to lift it into a sailing-boat and take it across the water. With this machine I managed to visit nearly every place on the Islands.

I must say I had no trouble with the men of the Shetlands. They were splendid fellows, and one could not find anywhere a more



Digitized by Google

obliging or nicer lot to deal with. They kept their lonely watches, in the most out-of-the-way places, very well both by day and night, reporting the submarines which, as related elsewhere, were, owing to the tides, coming to the surface to find their position. On only one occasion had I to reprimand a man who, while on my rounds at night, I found asleep. He was the only man on the Islands who, in my hearing, ever used bad language; when I asked him who he was he said, to my surprise, that he was 'a minister'.

We taught the men morse and semaphore signals, and also how to swim. I had letters afterwards from their C.O.s saying what splendid fellows they were and how good at their work. One of my ideas was to teach them to judge distances—which should be practised by our present Home Guard—because I believe many men have very little judgment of distance over 100 yards, even if they know this. I used to give each man a piece of paper and pencil to record their guesses and the one who made the worst had to retrieve the target amidst jeers from the others. Consequently they became very accurate.

These island people are what I should call self-contained and they seem to be able to do anything. My car went wrong on several occasions and, instead of me having to take it to the one and only motor shop in Lerwick, the men offered to, and did, put the engine right although they had never seen a car before. Also, they were able to make good and assemble a quick-firing gun, the most intricate machine I have ever handled, before an expert could be sent up from the Orkneys to do the job.

The women of the Islands knit in the most extraordinary way. While walking they have one long knitting needle stuck into their clothes at the waist and knit over this, using the natural wool of the sheep spun on a local hand machine. They seem to spend their existence knitting in this peculiar way. Some of the Shetland shawls are so fine that they can be pulled through a wedding ring. These are made by young women who are not allowed to do other work as it would make the skin of the fingers too rough for this skilful craft.

The sheep are peculiar to the Islands. These animals, when short of food in the cold weather, find nourishment from their own wool which they pull off their bodies. They also eat the seaweed off the shore—this giving the wonderful flavour only to be found in Shetland mutton. Geese, each with its owner's distinctive mark, are allowed to roam all over the hills, and they are rounded up at a certain time of the year and sold to the public. For many years after leaving the Islands I used to have them sent to England and distributed as Christmas presents to my friends. They are most delicious and cost then about two shillings each.



Digitized by Google

The Islands are well known for the Eider Duck and, although it may not be generally known, the wool from this bird, called Eiderdown, is chiefly pulled from its nest in which it puts a thick layer before laying its eggs. A great quantity of these nests can be found on the Islands, as these ducks seem to build anywhere.

The whaling station in the Shetlands can also be visited, but the smell of a dead whale is nauseating. It can be felt for many miles, and it is almost impossible to go near the station without being ill. The manager gave us a part of a whale to eat, and although I cannot say it was pleasant it was not too bad. A certain part of the skull was cleaned out and dried in the sun and given to our party. It looked, for all the world, exactly like Kaiser Wilhelm! The station was run by a Norwegian company. Owing to the number of whales being caught in the North Sea and elsewhere I heard they were becoming scarce, far too many being killed, and no restriction then existed. I wondered why a profitable undertaking like this was handled by a Norwegian and not a British company.

Later, when the war was finished, I took my wife and step-children to the Shetlands to fish for sea trout. The peculiarity of this fishing in the Shetlands is that these trout lie about in salt water in the bays at the mouth of the voes and readily take a fly under these conditions. Another curious thing is that sillock take the bare hook, an extraordinary experience to fishermen.

We went to Walls, a well-known fishing resort, and stayed at a small and primitive 'pub' which we found very unattractive. It was too full of people and very untidy, but one puts up with a lot of discomfort as the Shetlands are a unique place in which to spend a holiday. The islands, long and narrow, are most beautiful, with main roads down the centre, and from any part a short walk will bring you within sight of the sea. We motored from London to Aberdeen and took our car by boat from there to Lerwick. On the night we were due to sail a gale was blowing and I saw people being helped across the streets. However, as the boats were few and far between, we decided to go and had a very bad crossing. All our party were sick, and I had to act as nurse and steward. I remember hearing one of my stepdaughters, who was lying in her upper bunk, say to her brother below, "Look out!" Luckily for him he didn't; she was awfully sea-sick. The whole family thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Islands.

The Shetlands have hardly any trees and vegetables have to be grown within small stone enclosures to protect them from the wind which sweeps across.

One island called Foula, the most desolate of all, was inhabited by fishing folk who would occasionally come over to the mainland in their boats to collect the mails. Many must have heard the



Digitized by Google

recent broadcast on the wireless about this island and the loneliness of it. While I was there, one of the islanders brought me a bird which had killed itself by striking a telephone wire. I was puzzled to know what it was; in size and shape it was like a woodcock, but it turned out to be a greater snipe, a very rare bird. In the north of the island the Great Skua builds its nest. During the war I had leave to go everywhere on the Islands and I visited these nesting grounds. In peace-time this part is guarded day and night by watchers, as I believe this is the only place in the British Isles or elsewhere where this bird builds its nest. While there I was attacked by the parent birds and had difficulty in getting rid of them with a stick I fortunately had in my hand. They swept down like aeroplanes and as I heard the rush of their wings they were upon me. I also found a nest of the red-throated diver which interested me very much. There are no grouse on the island; I heard that some had been put there and that the big black gulls had killed them all. These gulls will pick out the eyes of newly-born lambs and then tear them to pieces. I saw another remarkable bird when I visited the lighthouse at the northernmost end of the Island of Flugga. I climbed two or three hundred steps to the top of the lighthouse and the keeper pointed to a part of the structure broken away by the fury of the sea. He also showed me a pure white puffin, which he said was a rare bird, and which, having been attracted to the light, had killed itself. Anyone fond of birds should certainly visit these Islands as every type of sea and land bird can be seen there. Another time I crossed over to Thetla, the home of the Nicholsons, when I saw hundreds of snipe which had just come across the North Sea and were completely exhausted and scarcely able to fly.

We spent many happy weeks fishing in the different voes. So fascinated were the children with their trip that they later expressed their wish to revisit the Islands, and I advise others to visit them. One should be equipped with a motor-car which can be easily carried from one island to another by the mail steamers.

When we had arranged to sail from the Shetlands, the prediction was bad weather, but my wife left by herself, leaving me in charge of the three children. On the night we were due to sail it was blowing a hurricane and the captain decided not to go until the following morning. We were anchored in the harbour and the boy—now Lieutenant Home Kidston who specializes in anti-submarine work and is in America—I found leaning out of the cabin window with a line and hook tied to the end of a walking-stick, catching small sillock which he was putting in the seasick pan, where they were splashing about!

Next morning the captain informed me he would have to sail because of his mail-carrying contract, so I gave my stepson a good



Digitized by Google

dose of sleeping draught. I was informed afterwards that I had given him a double dose and the doctor said I was lucky that he was not violently ill. He did not wake up for about thirty hours until we were almost alongside the quay in Aberdeen.

The Shetland Islanders disregard the wind but they do regard the tide. Some of their boats are fitted with the Diesel engine, the only one, they say, they can rely upon because should the engine stop it might leave them in a very precarious position. On one occasion the engine did stop when I was in a boat making for the mainland, and I noticed, being very interested in motors, the way the man dealt with it by pouring petrol into the head of the cylinder through a sort of patent plug having a hole through the centre and cap on the top. This was not an unusual operation in those days to start a motor-car, but it was done while the engine was running.

I was told that a nurse in a local hospital was a wonderful fortune-teller. I went to see her and she made a cup of tea, stirred it round and told my fortune from the tea-leaves left in the cup. This is what she told me, besides many other things, all of which I took down at the time.

"In a few days time you will have a letter saying you will lose someone you are very fond of." This came true because my brother, who had been with me on inspection duty in the Islands, was recalled to Cairo in connection with the building of the Sudan Railway and was wrecked on the S.S. *Persia*, which was torpedoed and sunk. Lord Montagu was also on this boat. Cricket nets had been fixed on the upper deck for a game, and my brother, running to the listed side, got caught in these and was never seen again. Lord Montagu went to the other side and was saved.

Next she told me that I would, before long, be sent away from the Islands, which I then thought absurd. I had contrived a method of conveying news of sighted submarines to the south, where the only telephone existed, and I thought it impossible that I, who had organized the idea, should be sent away while it was on trial. I was, however, sent, as she told me I should be, 'to the Mediterranean'. I said to her, "The Mediterranean is a big place; where shall I go?" She told me she did not know exactly but kept saying it was the Mediterranean. I was sent to Malta.

The nurse also told me that I should meet with a bad accident which would cause me to be sent back to England. I nearly cut off my head with a strand of wire hidden in a snowdrift on which I fell. The doctor thought this serious at the time as my throat was blocked up. She also said, "When you go to London you will meet your fate," and she described my wife exactly as she was then. Some people do not believe in such forecasts, but I certainly do, and anyone reading, as I have done, what Chiro wrote about the abdication



Digitized by Google

of the late King a number of years before it happened, cannot fail to realize that there must be more in them than most people believe.

On the boat sailing from the Shetlands the old ship's steward would run along the decks in his shirt—he never in even the bitterest weather wore a coat—carrying dishes for the meals. He was a remarkable character and a sight to behold with a dish in one hand, hanging on to the side of the ship with the other, and seldom upsetting anything although the ship bobbed like a cork in the treacherous cross seas with the wind up against the tide.

## CHAPTER XX

### SOUTH AFRICA REVISITED

MY WIFE AND I WENT TO SOUTH AFRICA A YEAR BEFORE THIS WAR began to visit the memorial to her son, Lieut.-Commander Glen Kidston, who lost his life in a flying accident on the Drakensburg Mountains in 1931.

His life, tragically cut short, was one of adventurous activity. His flight from Netheravon to Cape Town, a distance of 7,615 miles, in six days, occupied three days less than the previous record for this aerial journey. He had won international fame as a motorist, and a cinematograph film which he produced appealed to my (on film matters) uncritical mind as the best I had ever seen. It was a picture of wild animal life in Africa. The carcass of an animal, I think a zebra, was tied by night to a stationary motor-car to attract lions. The engine was kept running till the lions became accustomed to the noise, and this was kept up in ever-increasing light until at length the car was driven in full daylight, slowly at first, then with speed. Then the cameramen got to work and the result was a fine and exciting picture of lions leaping on the carcass, fighting for the prey and tearing it to pieces, their roaring and snarling being reproduced. The Prince of Wales was one of the party which saw the private exhibition of this film at a West End theatre in London.

My stepson had so many narrow escapes from death that there grew up around him the legend of a charmed life. As a fifteen-year-old naval cadet he was in H.M.S. *Hogue* when it was torpedoed and sunk in 1914 and he was twenty-four hours in the water before he was picked up and interned temporarily in Holland. After his release he served in submarines for the remainder of the war. In 1928 his racing boat, driven at about a mile a minute in the



Digitized by Google

Solent, and in which he and his wife were accompanied by Princess Imeretinsky, her husband and a dog, broke in half and all were thrown into the water. The ladies had lifebelts to support them, but the men and the dog had to swim in a seaward-flowing tide until they were seen from the shore and rescued.

His narrowest escape on the road was when his car skidded while travelling at 95 m.p.h. in the Ulster Tourist Trophy Race in 1929 and he crashed through a hedge. He was unhurt. His luck still held good when his car dashed through a stone wall in the North of Scotland, after skidding on an ice-covered road while he was attempting a record for the run from John o' Groats to Monte Carlo. In June, 1931, with Captain Woolf Barnato in a Bentley car he won the twenty-four hours' race at Le Mans, France; they covered 1,831 miles in twenty-four hours, at an approximate average of 76 m.p.h.—easily a record for that winding course.

In 1931 he was sole survivor from the burning wreck of a German aeroplane at Caterham, in which six persons were burnt to death. He escaped with his clothes on fire and put out the flames by rolling on the wet grass. He returned at once to Croydon and went up with a pilot for what he called a 'short flip' to steady his nerves.

Our journey to the Drakensburg Mountains was trying. The train from Cape Town was sixteen hours behind time owing to heavy rains in a part where I was told there were droughts as long as three years on end. We spent two nights in the train and had to wait till the damaged line was repaired. The rails were wet, and as we tried to go up a slight incline the engine wheels whirled uselessly and another engine had to be brought to push the train.

From Johannesburg, Mr. Lawlor—who had been a great admirer of my stepson—drove us 200 miles in his big Packard. The roads across the mountains were mere tracks owing to the rains. Though the car was equipped with skid chains it was almost impossible to drive, as there was mud up to the axles. If we had not taken spades and planks the journey could not have been made. Our reward was a sight of the beautiful memorial, with conical burnished steel top and a red light, which the Union Government of South Africa caused to be kept burning perpetually as a warning of the dangers of the pass. A full-size representation of the 'plane my stepson was driving when he crashed here is countersunk in white stone on the grass beside the memorial, the site of which dominates a vast plateau. It was a sad moment for his mother when she read the inscription to the memory of her son. He had died doing his duty. There is another memorial to his memory. A beautiful picture in Johannesburg Cathedral shows the coffins, side by side, of Glen Kidston and his co-pilot, Tony Gladstone,



Digitized by Google

covered with the Union Jack. As we looked upon it the light, streaming through the Cathedral windows, fell upon the pictured flags.

We found General Hertzog, with whom we had tea and a talk, a charming host. He entertained us at Groote Schuur, which was Cecil Rhodes' own home and which Rhodes gave for the use of the Prime Ministers of South Africa. To this house I had gone in 1897 and had the honour of meeting Rhodes, who appealed to me as a man of great foresight and vision in the discharge of his immense public service. I remember sitting in a room at Government House, Cape Town, waiting to see this famous citizen of South Africa and getting into conversation with a young man who was there for the same purpose. He told me that years before he had gone as a total stranger to Cecil Rhodes to ask his help and advice. Rhodes gave him £500 and told him to go back to his own country and make good and that, if he did, he could repay the money. He had now come to repay it. The young man, whom I saw again after his interview, told me that Rhodes had then made the £500 a gift, a characteristically generous deed. I have always said that the most distinguished men I met were King Edward VII and Cecil Rhodes. I would like to add the name of Dr. Frank Buchman, the leader of the Oxford Group. Henry Ford, his small head set beautifully on his shoulders, is another whose personality impressed me.

Of Dr. Frank Buchman, whose name has been much before the public lately, I feel that I should like to give my personal impressions. I consider him to be one of the greatest psychologists of his day, and both he and the Oxford Group have been unjustly misrepresented. When Lady Beecham asked me to meet Dr. Buchman I agreed, just as I should have accepted an invitation to meet any other person, or for that matter to see an aeroplane or ship, of which I had heard and which had aroused my interest. Having met him I decided to travel with him and I am very glad that I did so.

What first struck me about Frank Buchman, as about other notable men whom I have met, was his essential simplicity and his keen enjoyment of the homely pleasures. No one enjoys a birthday party more, and at Christmas festivities every cracker is a real treat to him. He and I had been invited, with some others in the Group, to meet Ford at his factory. We expected to be taken over the works and to exchange opinions about weighty topics, but Ford's ruling passion happens to be dancing, and at the reception in the hall of the works we were welcomed by a band and dancing-master, who proceeded to give us much-needed instruction in quadrilles and so forth. Frank Buchman was no more perfect than the rest of us in the rather complicated movements, but he entered whole-



Digitized by Google

heartedly into the spirit of the game and seemed to be having the time of his life. I can still see him and Mrs. Ford dancing for all the world like two street children thrown into ecstasies by the tune of a hurdy-gurdy.

Next to his childlikeness, what struck me most was his humanity. He has a prodigious memory for names and faces; he remembers everything about people—their relations, their birthdays, their joys and sorrows. He even remembers, years afterwards, details he has noticed in houses which he may have visited only once or twice and about which the owners themselves were vague and even ignorant. And what a delight he takes in people! That delight is, perhaps, the secret of his astonishing memory.

As I have said, he is a wonderful psychologist. He knows what is the matter before you have told him, and, indeed, often before you know yourself. I remember sitting with him while a man held forth for a long time on the failure of his life and pretty well on everything else. "And now tell me what really is the matter with you," said Frank Buchman. "Drink," was the reply. "I thought that from the beginning," said Frank.

What of Frank Buchman as a religious teacher and leader? I am, perhaps, in a special position to appreciate him in that capacity. My father, as I have said, was an extremely religious man and spent his life, after leaving the Army, in religious work. To my mind his methods were quite wrong, as he used to upset people rather than help them by asking such questions as "Are you saved?" to which he usually got as answer, "I hope I am," or, "That is my business." As a result he made very few friends and many enemies, and he put the whole family—nine—off religion for a long while.

I was brought into the fellowship of the Oxford Group because the people in it, contrary to what I had been led to expect, did not try to convert me but left me alone, offering me friendship only. I have never known Frank Buchman to hold the pistol at anyone's head and try to force a conversion, though I have known many to ask him for spiritual help. Above all he does not at any time display emotionalism or encourage it in others.

He wants to help people in their troubles and there is nothing he will not do for them; he will always place himself, so to speak, on the level of the person seeking him. He never preaches at anyone, except it be at himself; he wants to give to others the best he knows, the greatest help he has found—which is God.

Frank Buchman's personality and career can be expressed in three letters—L. S. D., but these do not stand for money, for which he never asks, but for Love, Sincerity, and Devotion.

I recall in connection with my earlier visit to South Africa that



Digitized by Google

MONOPLANE ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.
The first to land in Asia.

Digitized by Google

THE NAMES OF ALL THE AVIATORS WHO TOOK PART IN THE DONCASTER MEETING,
The first to be held in Great Britain.

Digitized by Google

soon after meeting Rhodes I was deputed by the captain of my ship to act as a sort of A.D.C. to the Duke of Connaught while he was on his way from Aden to Berbera in Somaliland. One of his staff was Cecil Rhodes' brother, Colonel Frank Rhodes. I asked the colonel why his famous brother had a reputation for reticence about his plans. He asked in turn if I played poker, and I replied that I was very fond of it. He then said, "Supposing you had four aces in your hand, would you give any indication to the other players what you held? Well, that was what my brother was like."

It is said that our Royal Family are prompted before introductions, but my experience is the opposite. I was on the bridge of the R.I.M.S. *Tenasserim* when we were leaving Aden with all ships 'dressed' and the shore bands playing the National Anthem. The Duke of Connaught came on to the bridge and the officers were presented to him by Captain Falle. The first to be introduced was Captain Duplat Taylor, and the Duke at once asked if he was related to Duplat Taylor, an ex-guardsman and Commandant of the Post Office Volunteers. The answer was, "Yes, sir; he is my father." When my turn came I was asked, "Was your father in the Rifle Brigade?" When I replied in the affirmative, the Duke said, "I remember your father telling me, when he was a young captain, about a certain relation of his called Trotter." The person referred to was phenomenally tall and had commanded with distinction a British force in Persia. He was usually called behind his back by servants and others the 'Kajoor' (or date-palm tree). I told this story to my father many years after, and he could hardly believe it, but thought he remembered an occasion when he had told His Royal Highness something about this giant, who was then General Trotter.

After the Duke had landed, he asked if the Somalis were good shots with their spears, and his sun-hat, or topee, was placed on the sand for them as a target. They managed to stick several spears through the centre of the hat, and this amused him very much.

One day the captain of our ship—the *Tenasserim*—asked me to go ashore and try and shoot some game, and I managed to get a greater bustard, a bird measuring some three feet in height and considered a great delicacy. At dinner the Duke looked at the menu and said, "Isn't this a new dish, Captain?" I looked at the menu and saw that the Goanese butler had called it "Roast Bastard!"

I had the honour of taking the Duke on shore one day when the surf was running heavily and was told to take special precautions to prevent his getting wet. I succeeded up to the last moment, when, just on landing, a heavy wave broke right over the boat's stern and soused His Royal Highness. A year or two ago, when I met him in London, I asked him if he remembered this episode. He said he



Digitized by Google

certainly did and added, "All the same, I am very glad I visited that country." I might mention that the Duke in his young days had been a subaltern in my father's company in the Rifle Brigade at Montreal, Canada.

To resume the story of my later visit to South Africa. I spoke to many of the M.P.'s we met during the day we spent with General Hertzog and one of them asked us to the House of Assembly for lunch. Afterwards, from the gallery, we heard a debate on the Third Party Motor Insurance Bill, and later the discussion about our National Anthem being sung in South Africa! Then we went to see the impressive Rhodes memorial, dominated by the statue of Rhodes (by Watts) mounted on his prancing steed, overlooking the vast veldt.

I did all I could in South Africa to warn the country, through the Press, to get busy on its air defence and to leave nothing undone in preparation for the 'smash and grab' tactics of the Germans. I said: "If the Union of South Africa were to break away from the British Empire it would be attacked immediately from the air by some foreign Power and would be powerless to offer any resistance. I doubt very much if it would be worth the Union's while to put up a fight. She is to-day as vulnerable to air attack as any country and lacks an Air Force sufficient to defend one village, let alone the whole country. Mastery of the air means mastery of the world. The sooner South Africa and other members of the British Empire realize this the better."

A leading South African newspaper, under a big block type heading, 'Expert Warns this Country', printed the points I had emphasized, which were as follow:

The geographical position of your country is no longer a safeguard, and the gold and diamond mines are a prize that would be seized by whichever nation dominates the air.

Every single country [I said] ought to realize the potentialities of the aeroplane. I further pointed out that the Dominions could not rely on Britain to defend them in the event of war. When an emergency arose every pilot and machine available would be engaged in the defence of Britain, which was so vulnerable to air attack. Dominions like South Africa must defend themselves. I said, "Start your own air factories, and training schools, and repair works. It is nonsense to say you cannot do it. The aeroplane is not such a difficult thing to construct, and if each Dominion had 1,000 or 2,000 aeroplanes, just think what a wonderful aid they would be to Britain. But one thing factories cannot turn out is trained pilots, and that is where the greatest need of a country like South Africa lies. The young men of your country would make first-class pilots. They have the build and the intellect, and what is needed is a Government aeronautical college where they can be thoroughly trained in the one form of defence vital to any country. The



Digitized by Google

cost? What does that matter? If you worry about money, you will soon have no country to worry about. The need is urgent. Start immediately before other nations are too advanced to enable the Empire to make any impression."

Britain's defence, I emphasized, lay, not in anti-aircraft precautions, but in an effective striking weapon—the aeroplane. I said, as I thought then, that the balloon barrage would not be of much value except for keeping the planes at a high altitude above their objective, and not all the anti-aircraft guns in the world could prevent an enemy air fleet from bombing London.

I also strongly advocated the creation of factories for the production of 'home-made' petrol. Though it would be useless for aeroplanes, it was suitable for motors, which as a result would not drain the supplies of petrol needed for planes. South Africa, I concluded, should embark on a more active air defence policy. The steps already being taken were not sufficient, and until the Union had a thoroughly efficient air fleet and a large, well-trained corps of pilots its freedom from attack was far from assured.

I have read that Germany has acquired 25 per cent. of Rumania's oil exports. The oil question is, and has been, all-important to Germany. Yet, do we fully realize that the United States, with Canada, could practically stop all wars if the former refused to supply her oil and the latter her nickel? Oil is all-important, but do we ever hear about its production in our own country? All we hear is: "We want aeroplanes." But seldom do we hear about home-made spirit produced from the finest coal in the world. If we lose control of the air, from where and how should we get the petrol except at a fabulous price?

## CHAPTER XXI

### PAGEANTRY AND SPORT IN INDIA

AFTER THE LEWISHAM BY-ELECTION MY WIFE AND I VISITED INDIA to stay with my brother, Lieut.-Colonel Windham, C.I.E., then British Resident in Kashmir.

I would explain to those unacquainted with this vast country that, apart from British India, administered by the Government of India and whose future Constitution is now in the melting-pot, there are the Indian States, ranging from large Principalities down to quite petty States, all under Indian rulers. These States cover about half the territory of the sub-continent. The Government



Digitized by Google

of India maintains connection with and authority over them through officers having the title of Resident or Political Agent. For the most part they perform purely diplomatic duties at the courts of the princes, but sometimes for exceptional reasons they are invested by the Viceroy with administrative functions. Such was the case with my brother, who was virtually responsible for the administration of the whole Kashmir State. This State is the apex of India and projects like a wedge into Russian and Chinese territory.

Gilgit, one of the Kashmir outposts, is almost on the Russian border. At the time of our visit the Resident's journey to it occupied about a fortnight. In 1933 the then Resident (Lieut.-Colonel Bailey) flew there in an R.A.F. machine in less than an hour.

In November, 1920, we sailed in the P. and O. liner *Caledonia* and the voyage was very enjoyable. It was a great pleasure to me to see Bombay again, as it is a wonderful city. From there we went to Rawalpindi, in the Punjab, where my brother met us in his car. My wife had brought her two daughters, so that, with all our impedimenta, there was a considerable load to be carried over the 200-mile mountainous journey into Kashmir. We spent a night in a comfortable rest-house and we reached Srinagar, the capital of the State. Kashmir is a beautiful country. The Mogul Emperors of Delhi, who made it their summer residence, called it "Heaven upon Earth". Another name, "The Emerald set in Pearls", expresses the beauty of the Vale of Kashmir against the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas.

The Residency, where we stayed, is large and picturesque, with a garden of 25 acres which in summer is a veritable maze of flowers. The house is adorned with fine walnut carving; and the carpets, made in Kashmir or in Persia, are sumptuous.

Srinagar, on the banks of the River Jhelum, is called the Venice of the East because of its canals and other waterways by which the city can be easily explored. We visited carpet and silk factories, all intensely interesting, and other sights. The Residency had splendid boats, manned by well-drilled boatmen in smart uniform.

We saw the Mission School, founded by the Church Missionary Society, in charge of Canon Tynedale-Biscoe, where for over half a century Kashmir youth have been trained in the principles embodied later in our Boy Scouts movement. Kashmir boys were, and are still, trained at this institution in good citizenship, in craftsmanship, to respect manual labour, to be obedient, honest, and unselfish. My brother, after a big duck shoot, would send hundreds of birds to the school, and the boys would distribute them to the needy. This work, in which Canon Tynedale-Biscoe is still engaged, must be of incalculable value.



Digitized by Google

We also visited the wonderful Mogul gardens of Shalimer and Nishāt overlooking the Dāl Lake. They demand a lyrical pen, which mine is not, to describe them. Another interesting visit was to the trout hatchery in the Dachigam Valley set up to hatch the trout ova sent to the Maharajah of Kashmir in 1902 by the late Duke of Bedford, who, in his younger days, as Lord Herbrand Russell, was A.D.C. to the Viceroy, then Lord Dufferin. There were difficulties about the hatching, but eventually all the rivers of Kashmir—some of them fine fishing waters—were well stocked with trout. For a yearly licence of about £10 one can fish throughout the whole fishing season, which corresponds roughly with the trout-fishing season in our own country.

Much of our time was spent in shooting. Duck-shooting in Kashmir is on a colossal scale. In the winter following my visit seven guns, my brother being one, shot 2,123 birds in five hours, a record which I am told has not been surpassed.

After three weeks of this 'life worth living' we went to the plains to visit the Maharajah of Bikaner, who had invited us to one of his celebrated ten-day Christmas parties which was to be attended by Lord Reading, the Viceroy, and Lady Reading. The Maharajah, who served in France during the last war and was a signatory of the Versailles Treaty, is one of India's most prominent princes. We reached Bikaner after dark on Christmas Day. It is difficult to give an adequate impression of its wonders and festivities. We passed through the palace entrance into a huge courtyard with a marble floor from whose surrounding corridors there opened all kinds of rooms including a Council Chamber.

I shall set down my record of this visit just as I wrote it at the time, in diary form:

First of all, we go into the billiard-room. Here a sight, which is probably unique, greeted our eyes. The walls are simply covered with sporting trophies. Skins and heads representing every kind of Indian game form a record of a long life of sport led by the Maharajah. Nor are his trophies limited to this room. They are to be found all over the palace.

It is Christmas night. Some eighty guests are dining. The Maharajah, his two sons, and their suites, wear black coats with white silk breeches and patent-leather shoes. Each guest is given a present. Each of the ladies receives two tiger's claws, set in gold, to form a brooch. The dinner is a prolonged affair, with a band playing in the courtyard. There is plenty of champagne, and afterwards the guests play billiards and cards.

The gardens of the palace are very flat, and a large area is set aside for tents. These tents are very comfortable. They are fitted with electric light, and hot and cold baths are provided. Every night a printed paper, marked 'Information', is sent round, and this describes what arrange-



Digitized by Google

ments have been made for the following day. Every luxury is provided for the Maharajah's guests. There is an officer to attend to one's every wish. There are horses to ride; carriages to drive in; a fleet of cars, and hundreds of servants.

The Maharajah—a man of about 40 at the time of our visit—has two sons, one about 19, and the other about 13 (at that time), and a daughter about 8. We never see Her Highness. But she looks at us through a 'grille', as she is in strict purdah. The upper part of the palace is given over to her; while the daughter has an English maid.

Up early next morning, we find ourselves speeding across the desert road in Rolls-Royce cars to shoot the demoiselle of blue crane which comes to drink at a lake, round which are some ten or twelve butts for those shooting. Our guns and ammunition have been sent on ahead, and are all ready for us at the butts, with stools to sit on, cigars, cigarettes, and matches—all provided. We have not long to wait. It is now about half-past six, and the sun is getting up. So the birds begin to want their drink. A number of painted dummy cranes have been placed on the edge of the water as decoys to attract the birds, as they are excessively shy. The first intimation we have of their coming is a warning whistle from the look-out men posted around. Soon we hear the plaintive cry, and then we hear the birds above us. We have printed orders not to shoot until we hear a bugle sound. Therefore we wait, while the birds circle round in a very suspicious manner ready to notice any strange object or movement. When they are roughly within range and about equidistant from all the butts, one note is blown on the bugle, and off go the guns. We repeat these tactics with each flock as it comes along until no more birds are seen, and then pack up and return with a bag of some seventy or so. They are magnificent eating.

After lunch we motor to the Maharajah's palace at Gajner, and here we stay the night. Next day we are up at 7 o'clock and set off to shoot the Imperial black-breasted sand-grouse (*pterocles arenarius*) which visits the north-west portions of India for about three to four months annually. It has a wide range outside India, over South-West Asia, Northern Africa, Spain, and even the Canary Islands. The average weight of the bird is about a pound, the cocks tending to be over, and the hens rather under, this weight. It is a fast, powerful flier, and can carry as much shot as a wood-pigeon. It comes very punctually for its morning drink; and the art of getting a big bag is closely studied at Bikaner, where the butts are carefully placed across the observed line of flight of the birds. King George V, during his visit to India, went specially to Bikaner to sample the sand-grouse shooting, and is reputed to have said he found them very 'tricky at first'. Some years they come in larger flocks than usual. This year is considered a good one, and in the morning's shooting (from about 8 to 11) a bag of some 4,500 birds is gathered.

The next morning sees us off through the gaily decked streets in Bikaner to await the arrival of H.E. the Viceroy. On every hand are Rajputs from small outlying villages, clad in every kind of costume and mounted on ponies. There are old warriors with flowing beards



Digitized by Google

and quaintly coloured turbans; camels carrying gaily dressed men and women; and the Bikaner troops with sloped arms, lining the route. Festoons of coloured ribbons stretch above us, and everywhere there are hundreds of people all agog to see the Viceroy.

We are placed on a high platform with fountains playing below. Thousands of pigeons and green parrots wheel around us, and the whole town presents a most picturesque scene. Suddenly, the guns on the fort fire a salute. The guard of honour at once present arms, and the natives, bowing low, cry, "Khămā, Khămā" ("Forgive us") as the carriage conveying the Viceroy (Lord Reading) and the Maharaja comes into sight. Lady Reading follows; and behind come other carriages and gaily decked camels, all passing through the palace gates. It is a most impressive scene.

Next day a gymkhana is arranged in honour of the Viceroy and the other guests of the Maharajah. The programme consists of tent-pegging, a shooting competition, a polo-ball race, and a drawing competition. Our party win most of the prizes, which are very elaborate—the ladies receiving tortoise-shell boxes with the Bikaner coat-of-arms in silver on the lid.

My brother's team, consisting of himself and his two sons (Ashe, Inniskilling Dragoons, and Bay, 18th K.G.O. Lancers), won the sectional tent-pegging; while he himself won the best individual score of pegs taken.

The presentation of prizes was ushered in by the Maharajah getting up and, in stentorian tones, jocularly shouting out, "Will the Windham family now please come up and take their prizes," which were presented by Lady Reading.

The following morning the Maharajah's guests, together with the Viceroy and his party, drive to Gajner for another Imperial grouse shoot. There are about forty guns on this occasion; and in two morning's shooting, from 8 to 11 (and it is always from 8 to 11), a record bag amounting to some 12,000-odd birds is obtained.

Some of our party go shooting gazelle and black buck. The Viceroy gets three good specimens.

The following day finds us visiting the hospital, native schools, the old town, and the jail. The convicts spend most of their time making carpets, which are known for their beauty all over the world. No aniline dyes are used.

One of the last things we see at Bikaner is a parade of His Highness' army for inspection by the Viceroy. It is a most impressive sight. The Maharajah and his staff are in gorgeous uniforms, and all the Rajput nobles of the State are present. Probably the most picturesque of all the units present is the famous Camel Corps, riding slowly past the saluting-point with their carbines at the 'Present', and following closely behind the band. Next come the Bikaner Lancers; and behind them the infantry in their bright scarlet uniforms. After a Royal Salute from the guns, Lord Reading leaves, and the troops disperse.

In the evening a State banquet is held in the fort, at which over one hundred and twenty are present. All the officers are in uniform,



Digitized by Google

and the Maharajah and his sons wear the beautiful State jewels. Complimentary speeches are made by the Maharajah and the Viceroy, the Maharajah speaking first. The entertainment lasts well into the night, and after it is all over we return to the palace to say 'good-bye'. Then we drive off to the station, where the Maharajah's State saloon waits to take us to Sialkot, the winter resort of the Resident in Kashmir, where we have planned to spend some weeks before going on to Delhi for the visit there of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

Sialkot is a big military station, and is located on a great plain, with a beautiful view of the Himalayan ranges in the distance. The 3rd Dragoon Guards, Skinner's Horse of the Indian Army, a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, and the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers form the garrison. The climate is very agreeable in the cool months. All the gardens are full of lovely roses, and many other flowers are also in full bloom. When we arrive the place is in full carnival—this being the annual week set aside for amusement—our programmes including polo, races, dances, balls, riding, bridge, and tennis parties.

And now I come to the memorable visit of the Prince of Wales to Delhi, the most historic place in all India; and to witness his arrival from the train we are fortunate enough to receive special tickets.

He is met at the station by the Viceroy and staff, and is then conducted to a gilded throne in the gardens adjoining the station. Opposite the throne is a large stand, where all the distinguished visitors and a number of Indian princes are seated.

The President of the municipality presents an address, to which the Prince replies in an excellent speech. When the Royal procession leaves the gardens, the troops lining the route are nearly knocked down by the crowds of cheering people. Every tree is thick with sightseers. A branch on which a dozen people are seated crashes on those below, but they pick themselves up, none the worse, and crowd to the front of the throng. We are guests in the camp of the Political Officers present in Delhi and are in tents. I was amused to see grass and cress seed being sown around the tents, and in a day or so it had sprouted, and looked very fresh and green like a lawn.

When, on the following day, the Prince unveiled the statue of King Edward VII, the great mosque of Jama, overlooking the memorial, was black with people, and the route the Prince took was thronged with natives of every caste and costume.

I am particularly interested in this statue, as I had known His Majesty personally in connection with my work as a King's Messenger; and when the statue is unveiled one thing that strikes me as curious is that the King is shown holding his helmet in his hand; for as a rule we do not uncover our heads in the Services.



Digitized by Google

Another very interesting spectacle is seen when the Prince lays the memorial stone of the new Kitchener College in New Delhi. On this occasion nearly every regiment of the Indian Army is represented by four of its officers. In the afternoon, some 4,000 guests are entertained at a garden party in the grounds of the fort, but so spacious are these grounds that there is no sign of over-crowding.

The Prince of Wales, the Viceroy, ruling princes from Rajputana, Central India, Kashmir, Mysore, and Hyderabad are present—most of them wearing jewels worth many lacs of rupees.

After tea in the beautiful Diwan-i-Khas, everyone goes on a tour of inspection around the palace gardens. These gardens are particularly lovely; and as the darkness comes on some 45,000 tiny lights begin to shine among the foliage, while the waterfall looks like a cascade of liquid flame as it falls into a pool covered with pink and white water-lilies.

In the evening we are specially honoured, being asked to the Ruling Chief's banquet, at which several hundred guests are present. No one can describe adequately the bewildering variety of uniforms and dresses worn by the diners. Countless pearls, diamonds, emeralds, and other gems gleam and glitter on the gorgeous State uniforms of the Indian princes. Nearly every ruling prince of India is present at this banquet.

Being guests in the Political Officers' camp, we are invited to all functions. I observe that the Prince of Wales seems to be happiest at polo matches, in which he takes part. The last day of the finals produces intense excitement. The two teams left in have a desperate conflict for the gold trophy, and all who witness it agree that Patiali *versus* Jodhpur is one of the most exciting games ever played in Delhi. The Jodhpur team, after having been three goals down, manage to win in the end. The crowd becomes so excited that it breaks through the cordon of soldiers and police and flows in thousands to where the Prince is standing to present the cup. The Prince never looked happier, and the enthusiasm of the Indians is tremendous.

The Prince pays an unofficial visit to the people's Fair. This is held near the Fort, and all the poor natives of Delhi seem to have assembled there, the crowd being enormous. The noise of the bands, and the shouting of the people, can be heard for miles, while the dust is nothing short of appalling.

The Prince passes through the dense masses of people who are struggling to enter the already over-crowded Fair, and had his arrival been announced he might, indeed, have run the risk of being crushed to death; for no force of police, however large, could have kept back that seething mass of humanity.



Digitized by Google

As it is, the scene that follows his entrance passes all description. The huge concourse of people, already tightly wedged, cheer and salaam on all sides.

When we leave Delhi we go on to Agra, a distance of some 120 miles. We travel by car, and the long road is almost perfectly straight and level.

The city of Agra is famous for the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosque. The former is so exquisite that people from all parts of the world come to see it, and sit for hours contemplating its enchanting design. Built on the Jumna River by Shah Jehan in the sixteenth century as a mausoleum for his favourite wife, over 20,000 men were occupied in the erection of this 'dream in marble'. Shah Jehan could not bring himself to take part in any festivities or amusements for years after this wife's death, so attached was he to her. He now lies buried beside her beneath the great marble dome—which is higher than St. Paul's; and like St. Paul's this dome possesses remarkable acoustic properties, every sound inside echoing and re-echoing around the beautiful marble cupola until it finally dies away.

The simple design of the building is what strikes me most, for there are no cornices or niches covering it, as is the case with so many well-known buildings—particularly in India. The setting sun makes its dome and minarets glow, and their reflection in the still water of the surrounding ornamental garden forms a beautiful picture.

We had hoped to remain in India for the Prince's visit to Jummu, where the Maharajah of Kashmir resides during the winter months, and had prepared a big camp for His Royal Highness; and, also, we wanted to see the Kadir Cup at Meerut—the great pig-sticking event for which an elephant had been allotted to us (from which to see the sport), but we could not attend, as I had to return to England on account of a possible General Election.

When we leave Agra and the beautiful Taj Mahal we set out for Jodhpur in Rajputana. After a night in the train we pass alongside the great salt lake. A map shows this portion of the land to be a desert, and so indeed it is. In fact the ground is so salt that nothing will grow on it, and the vast flat expanse is bare of vegetation or people. The only living creatures to be seen are a few birds hovering in the distance. This salt lake belongs to the Jodhpur State and brings in a vast revenue, as salt is sent from here to all parts of India.

At last, after twenty-one hours of heat and dust, we arrive at Jodhpur, where we are hospitably entertained by the Resident at the Residency.



Digitized by Google

Next day I call on General H. H. Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh, G.C.S.I., K.C.B., whom I had known in France when the Indian Expeditionary Force had landed at Marseilles in the early days of the Great War. He is a wonderful old man, more British in his ideas, perhaps, than any other prince in India. He is the great-uncle of the reigning Maharajah, and was, in turn, the son, brother, and uncle of preceding Maharajahs. He is notoriously popular with our Royal Family, and rode in the Coronation procession of King Edward VII. I find that his palace is quite unlike any I have seen in other places. It is very simple, with nothing at all ostentatious anywhere. The old man has but one hobby—the horse. He likes to wake in the morning with one looking at him, and arranges his bed accordingly, when he can. Polo and pig-sticking are his chief delights. Shakespeare makes King Richard III exclaim: "A horse, a horse. My kingdom for a horse." What could he make Sir Pertab exclaim without badly repeating himself?

When we are conducted over the native city we stop near a silk shop. No ceremony is shown, and every merchant in the street, seeing us pause, rushes forward with his wares, simply smothering our car with silks of every imaginable pattern and shade. Its narrow streets, which are paved throughout, and, therefore, not dusty, are thronged with people, being situated in the shadow of the fort, the great bastions of which rise 400 feet above us—a very imposing background.

Next we go by motor to pay a visit to the Fort. The approach is by a steep, winding road, with frowning walls on either side. The path becomes so narrow that we have to be carried in Sedan chairs up the final stage. The entrance is through about four or five imposing gates, an interesting point in connection with which is the degree of rank they impose on the noblemen of the State, who have, for various reasons, to enter the Fort. At the first gate, nobles of a certain degree—the lowest rank—have to dismount; at the second gate, those of a higher degree, and so on; and the only person who may approach on horseback the innermost gate is the Resident—the representative of the British Government.

The most striking feature of Jodhpur is provided by this huge Fort, which, from the rocky eminence on which it is built, looks down on the city and the surrounding country. The building was commenced in 1459. The construction of the defences is of remarkable strength and solidity. The outer walls are heavily buttressed, and the masonry is spiked to the rock on which it has been built, so that in many places it is difficult to see where the natural rocks end and the work of man begins. It is a colossal conception, to which a striking reference has been made by Kipling when he compares



Digitized by Google

the forts at Bundi, Udaipur, and Jodhpur respectively to the work of angels, fairies, and giants.

It was into this Fort during the Indian Mutiny that Sir Pertab Singh, then a lad acting under the orders of his father, the Maharajah, conducted refugee English ladies for safety; and the following extracts from a history of *The Mutinies in Rajpootana* may aptly be transcribed here:

". . . Accordingly, when an invitation came from the King of Jodhpore, through the political agent, Capt. Monck Mason, as it did shortly after, for all the ladies who were unprotected and wanted an asylum for the present, to repair to his capital, where he would take measure to protect them. . . .

The journey to Jodhpore was a difficult and troublesome one; the ladies were unprovided with the commonest necessaries of life, almost without any servants. . . .

At Jodhpore they were received with the utmost kindness and hospitality; and the King sent his fair visitors, according to Court etiquette, a dinner consisting of various kinds of curry and sweetmeats. . .

The King resides at Jodhpore itself, which is a large city, containing about 70,000 inhabitants. The city is commanded by a strong, and said to be impregnable, fort, built on the top of a hill that overlooks the whole country. Indeed, as you approach the capital, or stand on the summit of the hill on which the fort is built, and look upon the vast expanse of level plain, stretching on three sides as far as the eye can reach, it is impossible to help feeling the resemblance of the situation to that of an island in the midst of the ocean. . . . It is a very picturesque object from whichever side it is viewed. . . . The Maharajah usually resides during the cold season in his fort above the city. . . .

On the massive ramparts encircling the Fort are various guns of historical interest, including examples of the forerunner of the modern machine-gun; and also here, as great trophies, are the guns taken by the Jodhpur Lancers in Palestine, when they captured the fortified town of Haifa from the Turks 'at the gallop'—an episode that is unique in military history.

In Jodhpur the advent of the New Moon is always heralded in by the firing of a single gun from the saluting battery on the battlements; and at sunset, before leaving the Fort, we happened to witness and hear this ceremony, with its resounding effect over the city crouching 400 feet below.

Jodhpur, at the time of this visit (1921), was an out-of-the-way place; but nine years later, while on a second visit, I found it very much on the map. Under the enthusiastic lead of His Highness the Maharajah, who is himself an accomplished pilot and a Commodore in the Royal Air Force, Jodhpur is now certainly



Digitized by Google

the foremost State in India in 'air-mindedness'. It is a recognized night stop of the British, Dutch, and French air-liners; and one can hop into a 'plane at almost any time and be anywhere one wishes within a few days.

## CHAPTER XXII

### HUNTING THE PIG, THE PANTHER, AND THE BEAR

WHEN I WAS THE GUEST OF THE MAHARAJAH OF JODHPUR, AN intimation came late one evening that His Highness was to go pig-sticking next morning and that an A.D.C. would call and drive us to the rendezvous. As we approached it the sun was just showing and was warming the rather keen air. Some seventy horsemen, dressed in jodhpurs, ready for the sport, each with spear in hand, formed an impressive sight. They stood more or less to attention and made us the usual salaams. The country for miles was flat, the ground was hardened sand dotted with small scrub and trees. The surface had been disturbed where the pig had been foraging during the night.

The Maharajah arrived in a fast-moving car which made a cloud of dust and, spear in hand, he mounted his horse. We followed him on horseback through the scrub and were met by a camel on which was mounted a picturesque driver carrying a red flag. (These men are employed to watch for the pig and drive him towards the hunters.) The flag was waved and a great boar was seen running in front of the camel.

The Maharajah of Jodhpur and His Highness the Maharajah of Jaipur—the latter, by the way, had just left Woolwich—went out after the pig, by this time doing some twenty-five miles an hour. He swerved and backed into a bush and there defied its pursuers until a spear was thrown at him and again he was off as fast as he could go with the whole field in pursuit, including two or three open motor-cars. Finally he was thrust with a spear by the Maharajah of Jaipur and held to the ground. When all was over, cameras were brought into requisition by the A.D.C.'s and others, for this, being His Highness's first pig, everyone wanted a picture. Later, the carcase was hoisted into a lorry.

The party then returned to the starting-point; the man on the camel again waved his flag, and a second large boar was seen rushing across rough ploughed land. This brute was not so easy to attack as the other; he ran from one scrub into another attacking anyone



Digitized by Google

or anything that approached. He proved a real budmarsh or fighter, ripping two horses and inflicting a small gash on a camel's throat (and this was at least four feet from the ground). He also charged one of the cars; a boar has been known to jump inside one.

After the second pig had been killed I was fairly done up, so I sent my horse home and got into one of the cars which carried two men armed with rifles. Should anyone taking part in the hunt be in danger from the boar, these men shoot, and they seldom miss. This car had to keep up with the pig, sometimes at more than thirty miles an hour across every sort of country—hillocks, potholes of sand and ploughed land—swinging right and left between the thorn- and scrub-bushes.

I found it amusing to watch the reverse being put in and the car bounding backwards to avoid a charge from the boar. The drivers are absolutely 100 per cent. and manage their cars with great skill. They may suddenly come to a deep hole or ravine where it is necessary to pull up immediately, or, perhaps, to a tuft of bush, which they drive clean through. This breaks up cars, but the Maharajah has possibly over one hundred, with mechanics and enormous workshops with every kind of spare part, and nothing matters except the sport.

When we came to a halt, the Maharajah came to me and asked if I would like the experience of getting a pig out of the zareba (very big thorn-bushes where they hide), and I agreed. He fetched a lead-weighted bâton and handed it to me, "just in case the pig charges into the car". We followed the beaters until I saw a pig go into a zareba. Then the driver said, "Look out" and charged the zareba full tilt. The whole bush crashed on top of the car and I had to protect my face and arms from the thorns. The car was covered with bush yet it went on and the pig was driven out. It was most exciting but, as explained to me, it was the ordinary procedure when a pig took to this cover. An American Ambassador who shared this adventure with me, said, "Well, that's great. I've never had such a time in my life."

To keep up with the pig was a feat of super-driving, but the natives are quite used to it. One of the boars charged the car, but made little impression as he hit the axle.

On the following day we went to the rendezvous in a very large motor-bus which I understood had just arrived from England. On the way out, a wolf was seen galloping across the sands. The Maharajah borrowed one of the horses following behind and, galloping after the wolf, shot it dead. These Maharajahs are wonderful shots; it is a common thing for them to shoot a black buck from the window of a moving train.

We killed ten heavy boars, which was considered a good bag.



Digitized by Google

All taking part seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. I was driven off to lunch, which was served in a disused palace, the menu including iced drinks, hot curries and sweets. We returned later to Jodhpur, where a bath and a shut-eye ended a perfect day.

The following is an extract from my notes on a panther shoot, written at the time.

News had come that a panther had killed a goat near by, and that bears had also been seen. Consequently, it was agreed to make preparations for a 'hank' or drive the following day. The *modus operandi* was as follows:

Long before dawn natives were sent to the mountain-tops where they sat perched on rocks looking all the world like large birds. From this vantage-point they could see everything below. As dawn approached and the light of day appeared in the sky and when all around was hushed in silence, the native watchers returned. At ten a.m. we were told to get everything ready, as bears and panthers had been seen, so off we went to a village about six miles distant and there, under a huge banyan tree, we saw the various heads of the village and all the beaters, numbering a hundred-odd, squatting on the ground, some even looking like animals themselves. The shikari shouted the orders and the beaters climbed to the top of the hill, several thousand feet up.

Then, at a given signal, one heard the most awful din, mingled with the beating of the tom-tom, a native drum. Stones were thrown into every nook and crevice till everything was a regular pandemonium, every sort of noise being heard. Some made a weird wheeze as if they were suffering from a severe chest or lung complaint, others sounded like bull-frogs croaking after dark, whilst there were groanings and wailings as if there had been family bereavements on an unprecedented scale, and so on.

We were each given a rifle; we had our shot guns by our side, in case a wounded animal—especially a bear—made a sudden attack. Each of the guns was given a place, usually on the top of a rock on high ground, from which one can more or less see the adjacent surroundings. However, this drive ended without either panther or bear being seen, and we wended our way back to the village to partake of refreshment in the garden of the native chief; and under the shadow of the same huge tree, after tiffin (lunch), we discussed future action.

We repeated the drive, only this time after a panther which had been seen and had 'killed' the previous day. But our luck was out, as we failed to dislodge the beast from its lair, although we were shown two places where it lived, the floor being covered with bones, etc. We were all very disappointed because such bad luck is somewhat unusual. The head of the village told us he had never before known such a thing to happen on two consecutive drives. He put it down to the weather, which had been rather unsettled and the sky at times to be overcast, which was very exceptional at this time of the year. One of our party told us that on the previous night he saw a panther looking at him



Digitized by Google

by the glare of his car's headlights. If he had only taken his rifle with him our bag would have been something, after all. The panther is not difficult to shoot under the ray of a powerful light. One of the ruses adopted when sitting over a kill is to tie a long electric torch under the rifle, and when the panther or tiger returns (as it usually does the following night) the light is suddenly switched on. The animal looks up, probably thinking it is the moon or something of that sort, and so presents an easy target.

After a second day's disappointment, we halted on our way back and the shikaris (or hunters) made an inspection of another panther's cave, but finding the beast not there, we proceeded home, having had a long day and a very stiff climb up the slopes of the mountain. Still, it was a wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten experience, and certainly well worth the trouble, especially when one thinks of the old proverb, 'A faint heart, etc.' We hoped for better sport the following day, because the Indians always aver it is the third time which brings good luck. So might it be. . . . So unlucky, however, had we been with the two days' shikhar that some of our party thought of going up the mountains to get what is a really magnificent view of the surrounding country, but hearing that a huge boulder had fallen across the road, which would have prevented the car getting up, the trip was abandoned.

The third day certainly turned out 'trumps', and a splendid specimen of a male panther, which took six people to lift, was killed. This occurred the last day before we were to resume our way by stages home. News came that a panther had 'killed' and was lying outside its cave basking in the sun; also that another had been seen in an adjacent part to enter a cave.

The head of the village again ordered the whole of his men to assemble, and, after consultation with the head shikari, it was decided to drive the panthers towards the guns. One or two selected men were to go up to the cave and throw fireworks or crackers into it in case the two panthers should have gone back there. However, they were not 'at home', and after a time the whole of the natives were distributed in different parts of the hillside, some to watch and some to drive.

Suddenly, without any warning, a great 'tomasha' was heard, the shouts of the men telling us that they had seen the beast. From the different noises they made, one could almost locate where the animal was hiding. I was stationed somewhere down at the bottom of the hill, and saw the panther about 300 yards ahead of me. I took a hurried shot at it, but did not for a moment think I had hit it. Upon examination of the skin after the animal was killed, the wound found in its hindquarters was attributed to me.

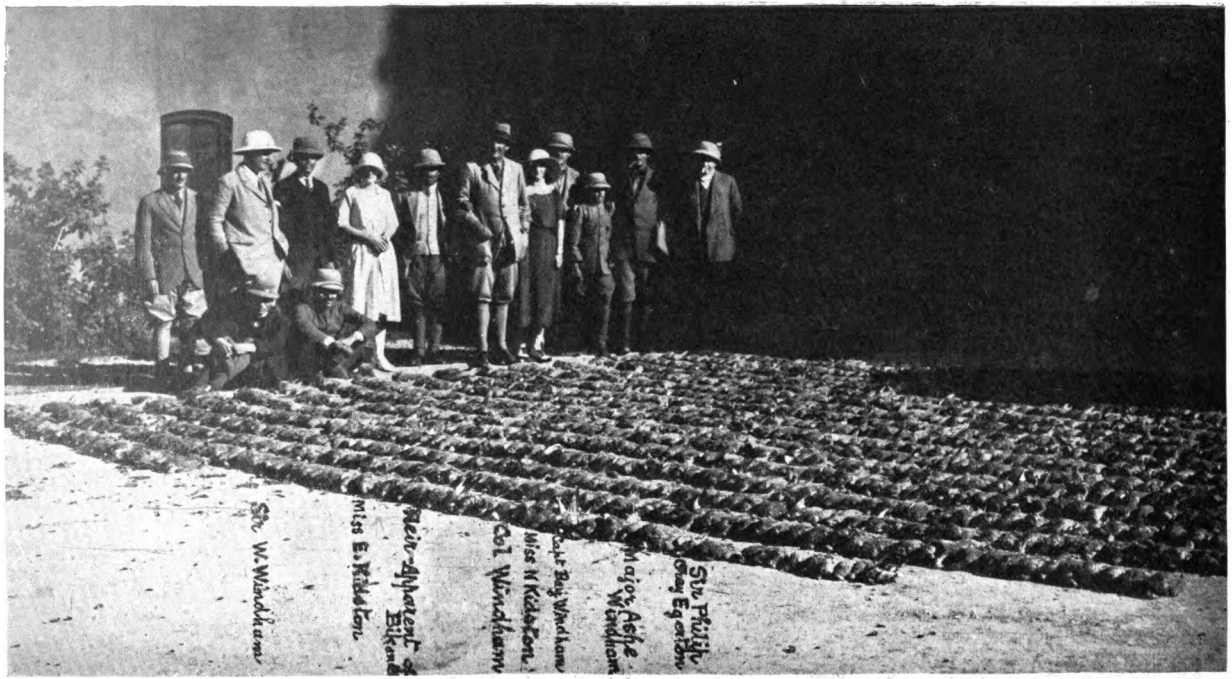
After this, hearing a noise away on the top of the hill on my right, I hurried in this direction and was told by the natives that the animal was not far away. Suddenly, while passing a huge boulder, I came across one of the native sahibs who was just in front of me. He, having seen the beast, was stalking it. At this moment he came face to face with the brute, and as the native gentleman was in my way I could not



Digitized by Google

THE AUTHOR'S MONOPLANE, BUILT BY HIMSELF AT THE DONCASTER MEETING

Digitized by Google




IMPERIAL GROUSE SHOOT AT BIKANIR AT WHICH OVER 6,000 BIRDS WERE SHOT—
THE RECORD UP TO THAT TIME.

Digitized by Google

shoot, so I shouted out "Maro, sahib, jhildi maro," which means, "Fire, sahib, fire quickly," which he did, giving it a fatal shot. It was lucky for me he did so, otherwise the animal, having already been hit as previously stated, would undoubtedly have sprung upon him or myself, as we were only a few yards distant; but the bullet had done its work and the panther lay dead in his tracks.

And so ended a very exciting day's sport. My brother, who had been in India off and on for forty-odd years, and had seen many hundreds of wild animals killed, said it was one of his most exciting experiences.

The animal was slung on a pole and carried down to the village to the joy of the villagers and the natives who had formed the hank. They assembled round the carcase, as this animal was reputed to be a sheep-stealer. The head-man was so pleased and excited that he drank to the health of the party in whisky, a thing he told me he had not done before. He seemed to enjoy it.

It does not fall to the lot of everyone to be able to kill one of these creatures under such exciting conditions. To those who have had the opportunity it will make an impression which, in after life, when one lays down rifle and gun, is almost impossible to describe.

My brother had arranged, as a farewell to our sport in India, two bear hanks in the mountains near Srinagar. Our party rode up the mountain-side on hill ponies until we came to the rendezvous. The valley below and the fir trees above made a pleasant picture. Over 300 coolies were assembled there to drive the black hill bear from the summit to the base of the mountain.

My wife, who was sitting alongside me in a machan about twenty feet from the ground, suddenly gave my arm a nudge and, seeing a bear, I fired with my right barrel; but the cartridge was apparently a dud one, and so I quickly had a snap shot with the other barrel. I thought I had missed, but later that day the natives brought back the carcass, having tracked it by drops of blood through the jungle, helped by vultures which seem to come from nowhere and circle around over any sick or wounded animal.

These hill bears are very small and live on wild fruit found in the jungle. They are not ferocious unless they are wounded, when they are able to climb up trees and are likely to attack. Hence the use of the machan. My brother told me it was no uncommon thing to kill a hundred bears a day in this part of the country during a hank.



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XXIII

## EGYPT, THE HOLY LAND, AND ITALY

WE LEFT JODHPUR BY TRAIN FOR KARACHI AND THERE WE SAILED in a liner for Egypt. In five days after sailing we were off Suez and next day we reached Port Said, from whence we went to Cairo. There we were the guests of Lord and Lady Allenby. The Residency is a fine, spacious house, with lawns stretching down to the Nile. The gardens, where snapdragons, lilies, and carnations grow in profusion, were alive with birds of the most varied colour and size. Gardening was Lord Allenby's hobby, and he was very fond of animals and birds. He had a large aviary and he kept several storks, one of which followed him everywhere. This bird was inquisitive and one of his habits was to pick at boot-laces with his long bill.

Lord Allenby drove us to the Zoological Gardens, and I was much interested in the many migratory birds kept there. We saw a baby elephant, in disgrace for having stepped on a lady's toe, and a baby giraffe. There were many rare animals, some of them the only specimens living outside their native haunts. In pleasant and beautiful natural surroundings and in the continually warm climate the animals seemed contented in their large enclosures, not bored as they look in our own country in dreary cages and often in dreary weather.

We attended by invitation a review of troops at which the Sultan, mounted on a beautiful chestnut horse, was present. Then we went to the races and sat beside the Khedive and Lord Allenby. We were honoured by an invitation to tea in the Royal enclosure. An Italian lady acted as hostess, as it is not etiquette for the Sultana to appear in public.

After a week in Cairo, during which we visited the Pyramids and generally "saw the sights", we left Egypt for Palestine, changing trains at Kantara. From Kantara, the line runs to Philistia, through the desert which Jacob traversed when he went to Egypt to visit Joseph. From Ludd the railway goes through dense olive groves to Ramley, and then south across the plains to Sharon. Just beyond, Zarah, the birthplace of Samson, is seen on a hill above the railway track, and the next station is on the site of the battlefield of Eben-ezer, where the Philistines beat the Israelites and captured the Ark. From here a gorge runs into the highlands around Jerusalem to the rock Etam, where the men of Judah bound Samson to carry him to the Philistines.

In the afternoon we drove out in a carriage to Bethlehem,



Digitized by Google

having a mishap on the way. At a bridge, one of the horses got his leg over a shaft of the carriage. This frightened the animals to such an extent that they kicked themselves free from the carriage, breaking the traces, and I began to think we would be hurled over the parapet into the Valley of the Giants below. Finally, we managed to calm the horses and got them re-harnessed. We passed the tree on which, says tradition, Judas Iscariot hanged himself, and Rachael's Tomb, revered by Christians, Jews and Moslems alike.

The view of Bethlehem is very picturesque, and all around are the scenes of Bible history. The Church of the Nativity, built in the shape of a cross, is the most interesting feature of the town. The day after our visit to Bethlehem we motored to Jericho, *via* the Dead Sea and the Jordan. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho, the old track of the pilgrims, runs past the old walls of Jerusalem, skirts the base of the Mount of Olives, passes the Garden of Gethsemane, and goes on to Bethany, where it descends towards the Dead Sea, which is 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

The sun was pleasantly warm, too, the sky a beautiful azure blue, and on either side of the road wild flowers grew in abundance. All was still and peaceful save for the bleating of distant flocks. At the great plain of Jericho we saw a most beautiful sight. To our right shone the deep blue of the Dead Sea, and the distant Mountains of Moab formed a purple background.

We left the main road at Jericho and crossed the great plain to the end of the Dead Sea. Then we left our car and sat down to rest by the still blue waters, watching the pack-donkeys being loaded with corn shipped from the other side of the sea. We arrived at the River Jordan, which the Israelites crossed, and where Jesus was baptized.

We crossed the plain until we could see the three Jerichos—the Jericho of the Old Testament, the Roman Jericho, and the Jericho of the Crusades. Then we were sharply reminded of the modern world. As we turned to go back to Jerusalem we saw, passing overhead, an aeroplane of the Cairo-Bagdad route, which makes in about eight hours a journey which would otherwise occupy at least a fortnight.

During our stay in Jerusalem we visited the bazaars and other places of interest. We saw the Wailing Place, where the Jews stand beside the old Temple wall and lament the destruction of their nation. Among the other sights of the Holy City are the Mosque of Omar, Mount Moriah, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Holy Sepulchre is within a small chapel in the centre of the Rotund, cased in marble, and having forty-three lamps always burning before it.



Digitized by Google

In the Italian liner *Lemiramis* we arrived at Trieste, a quaint little town, the houses being built above the harbour, overlooking a small bay. There is hardly enough space for a ship to swing to anchor; so we moored along the quay. We then transferred to a tender—a most beautiful packet, painted white inside and out, and kept scrupulously clean. She reminded me of my early days on a destroyer in the way she slipped through the water at a speed of 20 knots. We made the four hours' trip to Venice, 'The Queen of the Adriatic', built on piles sunk in the sand. Venice is a city of great charm and beauty, possessing objects of art gathered from every quarter of the globe. There are one hundred and fifty canals and four hundred bridges connecting the narrow streets. The gondola, doing duty for motor-omnibus, cab, cart, coach, waggon, and hearse, is propelled by the gondolier, who stands in the stern and works his single oar by pushing it so that the blade seldom leaves the water. He has wonderful control over his boat and can turn corners in the canals with marvellous dexterity.

The pictures by Venetian artists are numerous and beautiful. There are many by Titian; but while his works can be studied in most European picture galleries, as can those of Tintoretto, those of Gentile Bellini and his brother Giovanni can only be studied properly in Venice itself. Titian was born at Cadore, was taken to Venice when a child, and died there. A monument erected to his memory stands in the Friari, bearing his simple inscription, 'Titiand, Ferdicandus, MDCCCLII'. It consists of a great canopy, beneath which Titian is seated with one hand on a book on art and the other lifting the veil of Nature.

The chief place of interest in the city is the palace of the Doge, who was the head magistrate of the old Republic. Opposite is the piazza of St. Mark and a large open space always full of pigeons, which cover the ground and perch on the great church in thousands. Small bags of corn are sold to visitors, and the birds will sit on the hand or shoulder to get the grain. Round here, too, are many fish-shops, filled with fish caught in the neighbourhood, including one queer-looking fish which, when pressed, gives out an inky fluid.

We visited the glass factories and saw Venetian glass and mosaic being made on the Island of Morans, which is near Venice.

Our stay in this lovely city ended, a gondola took us to the station and we left for Paris, passing through Milan and continuing our journey through Switzerland to London.



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XXIV

## THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

AS I DRAW MY REMINISCENCES TO A CLOSE I REFLECT UPON THE wonderful changes that come within the scope of 'Waves, Wheels, Wings'. There is the contrast between the old clipper ship in which I sailed as an apprentice and the great modern liner. From the 'boneshaker' we have advanced to the motor-cycle; from the first crude, noisy motor-car to the silent, smooth-running Rolls-Royce. From the tiny, one-man aeroplane there has been evolved the huge craft carrying forty people over long distances. Then there are the wonders of the cinematograph, of wireless, and of television.

Science places its conquests in the hands of Man and he can employ them as blessings or as curses. My faith in the ultimately beneficial future of flying has never wavered. This faith was shared by all who toiled to develop the aeroplane, some at the risk and the cost of their lives. They believed, as I do, that the world will in the end learn to use this greatest of all achievements wisely and for the benefit of mankind, that long-distance flying will make people neighbours to such an extent that war will be banished for ever.

I have spoken already about the scepticism which attended and sometimes mocked the pioneers of aviation. In 1936, at a dinner given in my honour at the Café Royal, London, by the Air Mail Society on the 25th anniversary of the first British flying mail under Government supervision, I recalled some of the early doubts and questionings about the future of flying. I reminded the company in my speech that in 1910 *C. B. Fry's Magazine* had quoted the views of readers on this subject, and that the mere idea of an Atlantic air service was regarded by most people as a figment of the imagination. I had expressed the opinion in the *Magazine* that in a few years a flight across the Atlantic would have become as easy as driving down Piccadilly. Only a year or two after these articles had appeared Gustav Hamel, Admiral Mark Kerr, and Lieut. Port, R.N., were working on designs of a trans-Atlantic 'plane. But for the war of 1914–18 we should have seen actual attempts at the transoceanic flight during 1914. The plans had to be postponed, but 1919 saw the triumph of Alcock and Brown in their non-stop crossing from Newfoundland to Ireland in just over sixteen hours.

Final plans were then being made for experimental flying-boat crossings of the North Atlantic, the first to be operated to a definitely commercial schedule. The success of these paved the



Digitized by Google

way for the regular transocean air mail of 1939. What was considered out of the question in 1910 is accepted as normal to-day. Throughout the Empire (in peace-time) the flying mail has won its place as a routine method of transport; a letter weighing half an ounce can be sent from London to Sydney, Australia, for a postage fee of 2½d. The letter reaches its destination in just over nine days, compared with approximately thirty days by surface transport.

So much for the aeroplane in peace and as a beneficent agent. Unhappily, as we know too well, it has been put to the uses of war by our enemies in their attempt to destroy Britain and the British Empire. I can claim, as I have already said, to have been among those who warned the Government and the nation of the perils of this instrument in war and who urged the necessary defensive measures. I reproduce in full predictions which I made in 1912 and which were published in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* (I could not get them published in London as they were thought there to be too far-fetched).

*New York Herald*, PARIS
*Monday, March* 11, 1912.

## ENEMY WITH AEROPLANES MIGHT DESTROY LONDON

(FROM *The Herald's* CORRESPONDENT)

ST. MORITZ.—Aviation was being discussed in the hall of the hotel. The tremendous efforts now being made by France to render her supremacy in the air from a military point of view unchallengeable had turned the conversation that way.

Next to me was sitting one of the first Englishmen to interest himself in aviation—Captain W. Windham, he who founded the Aeroplane Club, organized the aerial post between London and Windsor, and founded the first aerial post in India. Captain Windham, late a King's Messenger, has been, and is still, one of the most prominent men in aviation circles, and the gold cup offered by him and won by M. Blériot was the first prize offered for crossing the Channel in an aeroplane.

"What is England doing in aviation?" I asked him. Captain Windham's reply will give perhaps serious food for thought in the United States as well as in England. It should be observed first of all that Captain Windham believes that the use of the aeroplane will be, at least for some time to come, confined almost exclusively to military purposes, and it was from the Imperial point of view that he discussed the question.

"England is hopelessly behind other countries in aviation," said Captain Windham. "Yet, on account of her geographical position, she



Digitized by Google

should be of all the most concerned in the future—a far greater one than those who have not studied the subject can realise. Its significance has already been demonstrated in Tripoli.

"The number of English aviators, mostly amateurs, can be counted on one's fingers. Little or no inducement is offered by the Government for men to take up aviation. Indeed, the apathy of the British authorities in aeronautical matters—one might almost say their hostility—seems incredible. Every topic under the sun is discussed in Parliament, from the making of cider to coal strikes, but hardly a word is ever spoken about the aeroplane.

"Oh, yes! Thousands of pounds have been spent on the construction and purchase of dirigibles, but I do not mind saying that this money is almost thrown away for all the practical purpose it serves. A dirigible may be better than nothing at all to an army, but it is valueless compared with an aeroplane. It costs a huge amount to build and its maintenance is costly, for the gas, expensive in itself, cannot be prevented from leaking out in a wind either in the air or on the ground.

"In time of war the gas is cumbersome and costly, while the shed for housing would be a problem almost impossible to solve. The shed would offer an admirable target to the enemy's artillery. The life of the dirigible's fabric is a short one. It is liable to internal ignition from sparks caused by the friction of two metals or from the motor.

*Germany is Progressing*

"Germany has discovered her mistake, and is now devoting herself almost entirely to the aeroplane. We see the Emperor offering a prize of £2,000 for the best aeroplane motor produced before his next birthday, and more than 120 manufacturers are turning their energy to aeroplane construction. It was only in 1910 that Herr Euler obtained the first German pilot's certificate. To-day there are 165 licensed aviators in Germany. And in England, as I have said, there is a mere handful of competent aviators.

"What has England to show against the seventy-two aero clubs in Germany, with their gross membership of 70,000; against the German aeronautical training schools for officers at Frankfort, Leipzig, Munich, Johannisthal, Mayence, Weimar, Mulhausen, Tilton, and other centres? Nothing but the Aero Club, which does its best, and here and there a few slumbering aerial societies of minor importance, is to be found in England.

"It is unnecessary to recall what has been done, and especially what is being done now, in France. The latest French patriotic effort in aviation has already produced a sum of above £24,000 to be spent in aeroplanes for the army. You know that, if war broke out to-day between France and England, it would be an easy matter for the skilled French aviators, who number some 400, to fly across the Channel to one of the British naval bases—Portsmouth, for instance—and to drop sufficient bombs to wipe it out of existence. I do not mean merely ordinary explosive bombs, but bombs containing petrol that would be able to set fire to different parts of the town simultaneously.



Digitized by Google

"Unless the town were equipped with other than ordinary water engines, which are useless against petrol, total destruction would be inevitable. No town possesses a sufficient number even of ordinary fire-engines to cope with all the conflagrations that could be caused by a combined attack by aviators. It is quite conceivable that London itself would be equally at the mercy of these flying war machines. The bombs would be dropped, in all probability, by night, and from such a height that no artillery could offer any effective resistance.

"There are no guns that could hit an aeroplane flying at, say, a height of 1,600 metres. And what could the mightiest battleship afloat do against them? It, too, would be the doomed prey of efficient aviators. Of course, some bombs would miss their mark, but only a miracle could prevent one or more dropping in the right place and blowing the ship to destruction.

"If war broke out to-morrow, the first and most terrible peril which the belligerents would have to face would come from the aeroplanes. Against it England is defenceless. Her fleet would avail little against a swarm of aeroplanes, which would have exactly similar effect as an attack by torpedo-boats, only in one case the battleship is armour-plated and possibly protected by its nets, and in the other case it has no protection at all."

I can claim that my predictions were justified in the last war and that they have been proved in the present conflict to have been substantially correct. Since then I have never ceased to warn our people of the danger from the air, and in my efforts to break down the dreadful indifference on this subject I have insisted on the maintenance of a big air force.

Before the war (1st October, 1937) Lord Rothermere wrote me the following letter:

*Dear Windham,*

*I am quite sure if we drift into war, Britain will be the target of massed bombing on a scale not even imagined by our worst pessimists. Through various channels I know a lot about German armaments. This information I get is from four or five of the fountain heads in Germany, and I can tell by comparing their statements one with another, that they are telling the truth. Our choice soon will have to be made between war and complete vassalage.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*Rothermere.*

Even after the war had started, a certain leading newspaper saw fit to publish letters from its readers discounting the aeroplane and its uses in war-time. In a letter written on 18th October, 1939, Commander Geoffrey Bowles, apparently a member of the Marlborough Club, as he wrote to me on their paper, said that



Digitized by Google

'the most dangerous enemy of England, and, indeed, of the whole world, is the Air Delusion. The delusion that aeroplanes are vital weapons of war will ruin us and everyone else unless dispelled'. Here are other passages: 'Why waste tons and tons of imported petrol on such folly'; 'these twenty futile bombers are only a symptom of a vast and fatally false strategic concept, based on the delusion that aeroplanes can produce decisive effect in war'; 'They prolong war'; 'The aeroplane is by far the most inefficient carrying machine that has ever been invented'. 'Bombers are useless, indecisive, expensive and wasteful in every way'. Of course I answered all this through the Press.

Commander Bowles's letter to the paper was followed by one to myself containing the following comments:

*Marlborough Club,*
*December 8, 1940.*

*Interest in the air is dying out. . . . The Air ramp is part of the Oil ramp. . . . The real use of the aeroplane is to burn petrol for the benefit of the Oil Sharks and of the newspapers who get their oil advertisements. . . . There is nobody so airstruck as an airstruck sailor. . . . They have done their best to ruin the Navy in many ways.*

The deadweight of apathy, adherence to old views, and inability to grasp changed conditions that hung so heavily about us, cannot be better illustrated than by the following letter to *The Times* by Major-General Sir W. Malleson on 7th September, 1938:

*Sir,*

*In the autumn of 1909 Sir Douglas Haig came to Simla as Chief of the General Staff. It was my duty as head of the Intelligence to take him reports from the Frontier, and beyond. He palpably took little interest in these, and when I said something to that effect he replied that in war-time his cavalry would obtain all the information he required.*

*I suggested that it was desirable, in peace-time, to have accurate knowledge as to what was going on in Kabul, Tashkent, and Samarkand. Obviously his cavalry could not get this. Perhaps he was relying on the development of aircraft? (Blériot a short time before had flown the Channel.) To this he replied "that in his opinion aircraft even when greatly improved would have no military importance".*

*I suggested that if Napoleon, on June 16, 17 and 18, 1815, had possessed even one serviceable aeroplane the whole course of modern history might have been changed. D'Erlon's corps would not have*



Digitized by Google

*wandered aimlessly between two battlefields; they would have won at Quatre Bras; the line of retreat of Blücher after Ligny, which Grouchy's cavalry had failed to follow up, would have been known; and Wellington, if indeed he had stood at Waterloo, would without Prussian assistance have almost certainly been beaten. Surely there was scope for the aeroplane in modern war?*

*He did not think so. His almost pathetic belief in cavalry persisted to the end.*

About the same time Marshal Foch was reported to have said that "the aeroplane was but a toy." Even the great scientist Lord Kelvin, who survived nearly up to the time of the last war, consistently declared, I understand, that he foresaw no future for the aeroplane.

I offered General Haig, for military instruction, all the 'planes I had with me when I was in India (1909–10), but he tactfully declined.

The War Office wrote to a deputation of aircraft builders, who wanted to sell aeroplanes to the Army: 'Gentlemen, Much as we would like to help you by placing your orders, we regret we cannot do this as we are trustees of the public purse, *and we cannot see that the aeroplane will be of any use to the Army.*'

This short-sighted view and awful apathy on the part of the Army did not, luckily for us, prevail in the Navy. Sir Francis McLean heard that the Admiralty was interested in the aeroplane, so, a year after this classic snub from the War Office, Sir Francis bought a couple of Short biplanes and offered them to the Navy on condition they were not flown on Sundays! Four officers were selected to take lessons at a private aerodrome at Eastchurch, Kent, and the first man to qualify in Britain's newest and latest fighting arm was Francis Murray, a 27-year-old lieutenant from New South Wales. To him went the R. A. Club's 72nd certificate on 25th April, 1911.

I often wonder what the world will be like a few years hence and what part the aeroplane will play. I think that vast tracts of countries, especially in South Africa, America, Canada, Australia, China, and Russia will be opened up by the advent of the aeroplane when this war is finished. There will be so many aircraft that the Government will be wise to offer these at a low price to our young aviators who will go out to the Colonies and open up the country with the use of these machines. All our English homes will be brought nearer to London and we shall be able to fly many hundreds of miles in an hour or so, instead of making long journeys by rail or car.

Most of our Postal Service will be delivered by 'plane, and the



Digitized by Google

present speed of this machine will be vastly increased. I foresee the day, not far off, when the Atlantic will be crossed day by day by 'planes carrying both mails and passengers.

The aeroplane is a dynamic, devastating, deadly, drastic single-unit instrument of war. It can carry the shell from the cannon's mouth to the uttermost ends of the earth. It has no regard for frontiers, seas, barriers, fortifications or even the Siegfried Line. It can soar beyond all the limitations of even the highest mountain, out of reach of all guns or searchlights.

I cannot see anything that can stop the aeroplane from ruling the sky, and therefore mankind, except perhaps the silent Death Ray, which, if investigated like the wireless, will ultimately be found able to cut out the spark from the internal combustion engine. If I had the means I should establish a scientific research college for the development of this unseen ray (which is with us all the time), which would eventually produce peace in the world.

In 1938, realizing there was trouble ahead and that there was a shortage of pilots for aeroplanes, I suggested to Sir Kingsley Wood that I should go to the Shetland Isles, which I knew well, and recruit for the R.A.F., and that I should be supplied with a van and loud-speakers. I was thanked and my offer to go North was accepted. Sir Kingsley agreed that the islanders would make very good pilots, but he asked me to carry out my propaganda in Midlothian, that is around Edinburgh. When I was at North Berwick, where we had taken a house, the manager of one of the big Glasgow shipping companies said to my wife: "Your husband will have difficulty in getting recruits from anywhere in these parts as the Scotsman is a bit 'ca' canny'." But his prediction was wrong; we got a very large number of recruits, and Sir Kingsley Wood thanked me for my efforts. For certain reasons I was unable to go to the Shetland Islands.

I applied to the Head of the Police in Edinburgh for permission to speak from the loud-speaker in that historic city. He said it was against the rules of the City that this kind of thing should be done, but nevertheless he gave me permission to carry on, and I had the honour of speaking to large crowds in the main streets of Edinburgh. I also spoke in the big baths at North Berwick while the people were bathing, addressing, by loud-speaker, a big crowd which had assembled to watch the swimming. After speaking in most of the big towns in the neighbourhood of East Lothian, I carried my propaganda into the South of England, in the neighbourhood of Dover, especially around the War Memorial erected in Folkestone. Afterwards I helped in the recruiting effort in London.



Digitized by Google

While in North Berwick I wrote the following letter to General Veuillemin, Commanding Officer of the French Air Force:

*North Berwick, Scotland,*
*24th August, 1938.*

*Dear Sir,*

*I am not in the R.A.F., but I have been asked to help in the recruiting of the Air Force in Scotland, having been connected with the early fliers and interested in the aeroplane since Louis Blériot won the Gold Cup which I offered for the first man to cross the English Channel in a heavier-than-air machine.*

*I, personally, fully realized the fact of England and France being united as they are, and as one nation when it comes to War it is essential that we should understand each other's language. As the air in the future must be the senior, predominating and controlling service for the preservation and peace of the world and for the safety and welfare of the two countries, I submit to you, Sir, it should be quite possible for some 200 or 300 French Officers to come to England and be attached to the R.A.F. for a period of say six months or so, and the same privilege could be extended to an equal number of English Officers to go to France and be attached to the Air Force.*

*I cannot imagine anything which could be done that would bring about a better understanding between the two nations, and an 'entente' of this description, besides being an enormous asset in time of war, the two nations would not only understand each other's language but also their machines and their air tactics. Also they would get to know each other's country.*

*Should this scheme of mine appeal to you, Sir, I should be only too ready to come over and discuss the matter with you.*

To this I received this reply:

*French Republic,*
*Paris,*
*5th September, 1938.*

*Dear Sir,*

*I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of 24th August. The solution which you anticipate, if it could be arranged, of a more intimate knowledge between our two Armies, is of a certain interest. The exchange of officers during certain months would give excellent results, I am sure.*

*Unfortunately, the increase now in our Air Arms necessitates the presence of our officers for training at home and for instruction to have extra supplementary ones also trained.*



Digitized by Google

*In thanking you for your kind letter, dear Sir, accept my cordial good wishes, etc.*

(*Sgd.*) *Veuillemin.*

*P.S.—Perhaps this plan might be taken up later on.*

I recall an address which I gave to the Haslemere Rotary Club in 1938, and I shall quote from it, since it expressed all I thought about the state of our air defences and has a significant bearing on what has happened in this war. After urging that the country should wake up to the peril of the air and maintain an Air Force second to none, I suggested that the British Commonwealth should aim at being one air unit. I quote the report in the *Surrey Observer*, which frequently allowed me to publish my views in its columns.

Our far-off possessions were to-day a weakness, but they could be made into the strongest defence or attacking party in the world. They had bitten off more than they could chew so far as the aeroplane was concerned. Overseas the Royal Air Force was lamentably weak. There were only 96 first-class aircraft in India, and there ought to be 196 or more. There were only 176 first-line aircraft for defence in Palestine, Malta, Irak, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Aden, and Singapore. Only seven first-line aircraft were added to the R.A.F. between January, 1935 and January, 1938, and these generally were short-ranged and only suitable for local defence. The machines for present purposes should have a range of some 3,000 miles and be able to carry at least two tons of bombs. He looked forward to the day when England (if she woke up) could prevent war by the training of her young men now and sending them overseas to our vast possessions.

Sir Walter Windham asked what there was to prevent motor spirit being produced in this country from black and brown coal, which would give employment to many unemployed miners and others. It was no use the Government saying it could not be commercially produced, because the Germans were to-day manufacturing it. It was composed of 40 per cent. benzole, 50 per cent. foreign gasoline, and 10 per cent. alcohol. They produced three million tons a year. Some of them would remember the German who flew from his country to England and visited the Traffic Conference using this spirit, which cost him only ten marks. This problem of fuel was more important than the aeroplane.

There were some questions he would like to ask our Government. Why were thirty million pounds a year allocated to building the marvellous motor roads in Germany and why were those roads radiated towards the frontiers? Why had Germany an army of 600,000 trained men and we have only 150,000? Why was their Air Ministry the biggest and most imposing building in the country? He saw by the latest placards that the Duce wanted a new pact with Great Britain. Italy knew only too well why she wanted it, and what was up with Hitler and his position on the Austrian frontier.



Digitized by Google

We had based our aeroplane building on what Germany was and is to-day, but she had, with her smash and grab tactics, added the Austrian aeroplanes to her air service. The answer to all this was that we must buy our planes from America, or build them in Canada and double the output by day and night shifts. The Labour Party, no doubt, would have something to say about it, but they would come into line in time as they valued their skins in air raids as much as we did. Russia to-day had some 3,000 planes in being of the latest type and size, working up to 15,000. Whatever was done, we must leave no stone unturned to get equal to these countries, and not only to get equal, but to get ahead of them. The sons of Great Britain, the soul of an island race, would never be beaten, but it was up to them to see that they had the right stuff to fight with. Then, and only then, would there be peace in the world. They could only dictate terms of peace when they were strong enough to do so.

Afterwards I met and talked to the Chairman, Mr. J. Hugh Edwards. He said that he had listened with great interest and that, although he had been a Member of Parliament for some twenty years, he had heard very little spoken in Parliament on the subject of the aeroplane. I asked him the reason for this, and he replied that he thought that "the word aeroplane stinks in their nostrils!"

Our present Prime Minister is outstanding in having taken a special interest in the air development in late years, but there are few members of the House who have done a single thing about it in the last thirty. Mr. Pemberton Billing was one of the few exceptions, and he got so little support that he, too, gave it up.

I have mentioned Lord Northcliffe, who was certainly one of the most remarkable men of his generation, a man of foresight and vision. I wonder how many of my readers know the prophetic and warning words he addressed to Australia on 1st October, 1921, just before he left Sydney, which he had visited in the course of his extensive tour of the Far East? These appear at the end of the book which he wrote, *My Journey Round the World*, which was published in 1923 after he had died. Lord Northcliffe described Australia (the same applying to New Zealand) as rich in promise and at the same time weakest of all the nations, as "far away from what has happened (the reference is to the last war) but in the midst of what may happen." He went on:

I have been struck by all you have done in a single century. It is a record of which any young country may be proud, but I am amazed at your indifference to the events and portents of the outside world, and especially in Asia. One can almost smell the East on your northern winds, and yet I have met scarcely a score of men and women in Australia with any sense of the imminent danger in which this country stands.



Digitized by Google

Within a fortnight's steam of your Commonwealth you have thousands of millions of people, all of whom are crowded and restless, and some ambitious and powerful. Their yearly increase by birth is more than five millions, yet you go about your work and play as though the lust for territory had not all down the centuries been a cause of war, and as though the history of the world had not been the story of the overthrow of the weak by the strong.

The situation is disquieting, but it is not beyond repair if Australians could cease always to look inwards at themselves and their local politics and look more across the seas.

The burden of Lord Northcliffe's warning, following the passages quoted, was that Australia must be populated if it were to be saved for the Anglo-Saxon race. The world, he said, would not tolerate an empty and idle Australia. Deeply impressed as I was with the supreme importance of air defence for the Australian Continent, I offered, in 1938, to go there to do what I could to rouse the people to the need for strengthening their country's air power. I received a reply to the letter which I had sent to the High Commissioner for Australia, and here is my rejoinder, which speaks for itself:

*Warren Mere,*
*Godalming,*
*31st October, 1938.*

*Dear Sir,*

*Thank you for your letter, but I am somewhat dismayed at not being encouraged to go out to that far-off Eastern Dominion of ours and help to get a real move on with her Air Arm Defences.*

*So serious is the question of the aeroplane to-day that a country which is not efficiently and fully armed in its air defences will surely lose its possessions, especially one situated so far east as Australia. You may say, "Yes, but what do you know about it?" I submit I have had these visions and they have turned out to be true.*

*I cannot here relate them all, but state one or two. When I was commissioned to bring back the Russian Treaty from Petersburg I wrote to the Chief Clerk of the F.O. a letter about Russia which so astonished him that he sent for me to see him. Yet what I said came true.*

*Again I foresaw the uses of the aeroplane and was the first person to demonstrate its uses in the commercial world by carrying the first official Air Mail in 1911.*

*Again I have for some time past been warning the country through the Press what would happen in the near future, and to-day, October 31st, I received a letter from Mr. Hugh Edwards (M.P. for twenty years) saying, "If only the Powers that Be had given heed to your past warnings the whole situation would be vastly different now."*

*To-day I want to warn your country to get at once some 5,000*



Digitized by Google

*up-to-date 'planes (and 8,000 pilots) definitely built in your country, as there is no time to lose. I do not like writing this, but it is my duty to do so, whether one likes it or not. The writing is on the wall.*

*The aeroplane is the most deadly, death-dealing, mobile instrument ever invented by the hand of man and, like wireless, it can penetrate to all parts of the world and is independent of guns, seas, fortifications, frontiers or Maginot Line, and any country ignoring this fact and its future possibilities will surely rue it, and this is my opinion after thirty years close touch with it.*

*I have the honour to be, Sir,*
*(Sgd.) W. Windham.*

I wish to mention one service which I was able to perform for those gallant airmen of ours who are fighting day and night and giving their lives for the safety of their country. In April, 1940, I submitted to the Ministry of Aircraft Production the device of a glove or gauntlet which could be heated by the insertion of a chemically prepared pad. On the advice of the Ministry I took out a provisional patent for this device. I submitted it to the R.A.F., and after a time they took up the idea and gave very big orders for the making of the gloves. I also applied the same principle to the heating of a long boot.

My work in connection with the warming glove I regard as one of the best things I have done for aviation since its early days. It helps our airmen—shall I call them our human shields, which they certainly are?—to have some degree of comfort on their arduous flights and to use their hands which might otherwise in certain conditions become frozen. I asked, I think not unreasonably, that my name should be associated with this device, and I received a letter, signed by Colonel Moore-Brabazon, M.P., then Minister of Aircraft Production, refusing my request on the ground that the Government did not want the devices they used to be associated with any particular name.

## CHAPTER XXV

### HOW I CAME TO INHERIT A WANDERLUST

I AM DESCENDED ON MY FATHER'S SIDE FROM THE WYNDHAMS and the Smijths, and on my mother's side from the Russells, Dukes of Bedford. As I do not care for double-barrelled names, I do not call myself Smijth-Windham, my proper surname, the



Digitized by Google

prefix being derived from my ancestor Sir Thomas Smijth, principal Secretary of State to Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth. He was twice Ambassador to France, and during his first embassy wrote *De Republica Anglorum*, the most important description of the Constitution and Government of England in the Tudor age. It was first printed in London in 1538 and passed through eleven editions. The editions since 1589 have the title *The Commonwealth of England.* The name Wyndham was, originally, de Wymondham, being taken from the town of Wymondham in Norfolk. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the spelling varied according to individual taste—Wyndham, Windham, Wendham, Windam, Vindham. Gradually, however, two spellings were adopted. Some branches stuck to Wyndham, others to Windham. Taking the Wyndhams as an example, it is easy to trace the adventurous spirit from an early ancestor through father and son, here missing a generation or two, there branching off to a cousin or nephew, or even coming out in females, but nevertheless descending slowly but surely until it reaches myself and passes relentlessly on to the next generation. Who knows in what Windham it will appear next, or when?

The Hon. Hugh Wyndham has written a full and very excellent history of the Wyndham family, bringing out clearly all their characteristics. This book was reviewed by Mr. J. Pope-Hennessy, who complimented the family by saying, "Here is the perfect history of the perfect English family."

It is with hesitation that I mention my family, but my object is to give to those who do not know of the Wyndhams, and who have not read Mr. Wyndham's book, some idea of my ancestors as they bear relation to my own 'wanderlust'.

One of the first recorded adventures in our family concerned a lady, Margery, wife of John Wyndham, who in 1461 bought 'Felbrigg'—one of the 'show' places in Norfolk—from the trustees of Sir Simon de Felbrigg. He immediately installed his wife in the house as châtelaine and went off on a journey. As soon as he had left, Sir John de Felbrigg, Sir Simon's heir-at-law, came to dispute the right of the Wyndhams to his ancestral home, and he proceeded to take possession with an armed force. Mrs. Wyndham was extremely courageous. Although she was unarmed and all her servants had run away, she locked herself in a room, refusing to surrender possession of the house; but Sir John broke down the door, and, catching the lady by the hair, dragged her down the stairs and out into the courtyard. However, 'All's well that ends well'. The case was duly settled by law and John Wyndham regained possession of his estate on the payment of a large sum of money to its former owner.



Digitized by Google

The son of this John, also a John, became involved in the intrigues and plots to put the Earl of Suffolk on the Throne, and in 1502 he was beheaded for treason on Tower Hill, together with Sir James Tyrell (the same who had murdered the Princes in the Tower). There is, however, considerable evidence that this conspiracy never really existed except in the mind of the King, Henry VII, who appears to have invented it as an excuse for ruining the Earl of Suffolk, whom he greatly feared as having far more right to the Throne than himself. The part Wyndham was supposed to have played in all this was never made clear. Years earlier, in 1487, this Sir John had been knighted after the victory of the Battle of Stoke, in which he fought in support of Henry VII against the Earl of Lincoln, Suffolk's brother, and Lambert Simnel.

Sir John's grandson, Vice-Admiral Thomas Wyndham, lived in the time which might be called the dawn of the British Empire. Born in 1508, he was the son, by a second wife, of that Sir Thomas—a distinguished naval commander—who attended King Henry VIII as one of the Knights of his Bodyguard at the sieges of Therouenne and Tournai. Young Thomas, on the death of his father, in 1521, became a ward of the King. He was given into the hands of Thomas Cromwell, and after his education—probably in Italy, as was desired in his father's will—he served as a youth under Ormonde in Ireland. His health broke down and he retired temporarily to his new estate, the desecrated Monastery at Chicksands in Bedfordshire. Here he soon found that a quiet life did not suit him and he joined the Navy. He rose to command his own ship, fighting valiantly against the French, whom he treated as gallant foes; but the Spaniards met with scant ceremony at his hands, and for this and similar things he frequently got into trouble. He was present when the English tried to prevent the child, Mary, Queen of Scots, from escaping to France. When the English were besieged at Haddington, Wyndham and another dug their way out under the walls behind the enemy and got relief. This place is known as 'Wyndham's Bulwark' to this day. In 1551 he was one of the first Englishmen to trade with Morocco.

But it was not only his own adventures which interested him. He loved to encourage others to 'go and do likewise'. He helped financially with several explorations, notably with that expedition which, led by Sir Hugh Willoughby, sailed north of the Scandinavian countries and through the Arctic Ocean to North Russia, opening up trade between the two countries. In 1553 Wyndham started off on a voyage with a famous Portuguese explorer to the mouth of the River Niger, but died of fever and was buried at sea.

Thomas's half-nephew, John, had one of the strangest experiences that could ever happen to man. In 1558 he married



Digitized by Google

Florence, sister of the Nicholas Wadham who founded Wadham College, Oxford, and nine months after the marriage she died. On the night after her funeral John was mourning her and her unborn child at their home at Kentford when he heard a knock at the door. He opened it, and there stood his wife, still wrapped in her shroud! She had not died but had fallen into a cataleptic trance, from which she had been awakened when the verger attempted to cut some valuable rings from her fingers. Within a fortnight of her 'return to life' a son was born to her, John Windham (of Orchard Wyndham in Somerset, of Felbrigg in Norfolk, and of Silverton in Devon), who grew up to become the father of nine sons and six daughters, and the direct ancestor of many branches of the Wyndhams and Windhams, including the Wyndhams, Earls of Egremont, and their descendants, the Barons Leconfield, the Windhams of Waghen, the Wyndhams of Cromer (now extinct), the Wyndham-Quins, Earls of Dunraven, and the Wyndhams of Orchard Wyndham.

The story of Florence Wyndham reminds me of two others, one of which happened to a descendant of Florence's, Henrietta, the daughter of William Wyndham of Dinton. She lay in a cataleptic trance for nine days. Her mother persisted in holding a looking-glass to her daughter's mouth and would not allow her to be moved so long as there was the least sign of moisture on the glass. On the ninth day, as the maid leaned over the bed, Henrietta suddenly pulled aside the curtains and said, "Surely I must have been asleep a very long time!" The maid screamed and rushed out of the room. When Henrietta's mother came running in she found her daughter sitting up in bed, laughing and asking what on earth had caused the maid to dash out of the room making such a noise.

The other story concerns another ancestor of mine, a wealthy old lady who died many years ago, and of whom it was recorded in a Norfolk local paper that she left instructions in her will that her coffin was to be borne by her staff across the fields to the church. When the bearers were rounding a corner the coffin was accidentally knocked against the side of the church, and the lady, who was really in a trance, woke up. In response to her frantic knockings the bearers hastened to release her. Returning home, she continued to live with her husband for some considerable time, and local gossip had it that the husband suffered more than a little from the lady's uncertain temper and somewhat sharp tongue! Then she 'died' a second time and was carried once more across the fields in the leaden coffin. When the bearers approached the spot where the coffin had been knocked against the side of the church, the husband walking behind them called out, "Be careful, boys!"

It was Colonel Sir Francis Wyndham of Trent, representing



Digitized by Google

another branch of the family, who sheltered Charles II after the Battle of Worcester and who, during the Civil War, was made Governor of Dunster Castle. Colonel William Windham of Felbrigg was an early mountaineer, and was reputed to be one of the finest horsemen in England; it is said he could pick up an apple from the ground while riding at full gallop.

His son, the Rt. Hon. William Windham (1750–1810), Secretary of War under Pitt, was a pioneer balloonist. Macaulay, describing the scene in the Great Hall of Westminster at the Trial of Warren Hastings, wrote: 'There sat the first gentleman of his age, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham'. Fanny Burney said of him: 'He is one of the most agreeable, spirited, well-bred and brilliant conversers I have ever spoken with'. The Windham Club was named after William Windham, who was described as 'The model of an English gentleman'. Besides being a statesman, Windham was a distinguished scholar and mathematician. Dr. Johnson had a very high opinion of him and enjoyed paying him a visit and engaging in an argument with him.

Another active member of our tribe was General Sir Charles Ashe Windham, K.C.B., commonly known as 'Redan' Windham, from his achievement of being the first man into the Redan, when it was stormed by our troops in the Crimea. He was a Guardsman, and a distinguished soldier. He later had a command in India, and played a prominent part around Cawnpore in quelling the Indian Mutiny.

In operations conducted by him the Rifle Brigade, in which my father and one of his brothers were both serving, was preparing, after an arduous day, to settle down for the night; when suddenly an Indian messenger arrived in hot haste and disengaged from his clothing a quill in which was rolled up a written order purporting to be signed by General Windham, telling the regiment to push on in all haste to some other place.

My father and his brother were able to assure all concerned that the signature was not that of General Windham and that the order was pretty obviously a fake, designed probably to entrap the regiment; and that view was accepted, and turned out to be correct.

My own uncle, Francis Wentworth Smijth-Windham, who was born in 1847 and died in 1926, had adventures which took him to all parts of the world. Once he was caught in an Arctic winter in Lapland and was forced to live in an ice-hut with a Lap family. Another time he saved himself by good horsemanship during a prairie fire in the Argentine, both the assistants who were with him losing their lives. On another occasion, in New Zealand, his horse bolted with him and carried him over a precipice. He was found



Digitized by Google

lying at the bottom by a Maori chieftain's daughter, who nursed him back to health—and also fell in love with him! Her father, whose only child she was, offered him her hand in marriage, and, as a further inducement, promised to make him heir to his chieftainship and estates, but Mr. Windham refused.

Mr. Windham did not confine himself to horses as a means of locomotion. There is the story told of a 'monster' which had somehow got into the protected bathing pool in Durban Bay. Mr. Windham volunteered to find out what it was, and also to 'rid the pool of that turbulent beast'. He donned his diving-suit and entered the pool, discovering the opening through which the 'monster' had entered. Something flashed between his legs and out, and Francis Smijth-Windham found himself carried away to sea on the back of a—sword-fish!

Another of my uncles, Mr. Ashe Windham, of Waghen, had several adventures among the Zulus when he was Resident Magistrate at Pietermaritzburg. Once he went into the Zulu country to settle some dispute between two chiefs, and he was alone among thousands of frenzied natives. At any moment the two tribes might have come to blows and he would have had no chance of survival, but he had the presence of mind to order one of the chiefs to send his men home, after which the other tribe settled down peaceably and the 'palaver' began.

My nephew, William Russell Smijth-Windham of the Royal Corps of Signals, is carrying on the family's tradition of adventure. He was twice a member of the Mount Everest Expedition, going in the capacity of wireless operator.

I was born in 1868. My father was Major G. Smyth-Windham, of the Rifle Brigade, a son of Captain Joseph Smyth-Windham, of the 10th Hussars and 17th Lancers, of Waghen Hall in the East Riding of Yorkshire, who was a Master of Hounds and whose picture (by Ferneley), mounted on a favourite hunter, is now in the National Gallery.

After being educated, along with five of his brothers, at Eton, my father joined the Prince Consort's Own Rifle Brigade, and served in that regiment with H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, who was a subaltern in his Company. During his service in the Crimea, after the battle of the Alma, he was reputed to be the youngest captain in the Army. He told me that at the Battle of Balaclava the Rifle Brigade were on the left of the 'thin Red Line' (the 18th Highlanders). He also saw service in the Indian Mutiny campaign.

He married, in 1865, Clarissa, daughter of Lord Charles James Fox Russell, M.P., then Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons. This grandfather of mine was rather a remarkable character—a real link with the past. He was born in 1807 in Dublin Castle,



Digitized by Google

during the Viceroyalty of his father, John, 6th Duke of Bedford, K.G., his mother being a daughter of the 6th Duke of Gordon. His Christian names of Charles James Fox were given to him after his godfather, the celebrated Whig statesman so named. John officiated as a page at the Coronation of George IV, and later became a cornet in the Blues. He remembered hearing that monarch exclaim at a Court function, on seeing an officer in that regiment improperly dressed in some detail of uniform: "Who is that d——d fellow? Is he the regimental doctor?"

He had discussed the merits of *The Bride of Lammermoor* with Walter Scott, on its first appearance as an anonymous romance; and had actually conversed with a man who had been 'out' with Prince Charlie in 1745. He was a brother of the famous Lord John Russell (afterwards Earl Russell), thrice Prime Minister of England in Reform Bill days; and also of the well-known old Duchess of Abercorn, who was 'Granny' to her numberless descendants, mostly people of exalted rank and consequence.

She had married, at the age of twenty, the Marquis (afterwards Duke) of Abercorn, and had a family of seven sons and seven daughters. My mother thereby acquired a veritable galaxy of female first cousins, for the seven daughters all married and became respectively the Duchess of Buccleuch, the Marchionesses of Blandford and Lansdowne and the Countesses of Lichfield, Durham, Mount Edgcumbe, and Winterton.

The Duke of Abercorn was twice Viceroy of Ireland, and he and my great-aunt celebrated, in 1882, their golden wedding, which was made picturesquely the theme of the following verse:

Not when the golden ring joined either line
Russell and Hamilton by rite divine
Could any skill in palmistry portray
The golden promise of that marriage day.
Cloudless and clear the morning sky they knew,
Then the bright midday with its stainless blue.
Thrice happy then—yet happier still, who knows,
The long calm evening and the golden close.
Nor needs the prophets, nor the poets' sight
To read the promise of a day as bright,
For here no portent threatens to decline
The ancient glories of a princely line,
But each tradition of each honoured name
Is bright with augury of future fame—
This day, most golden, most memorial,
Sees children's children in the stately hall.
Warriors and statesmen their proud names renew,
Heirs of Lansdowne, Marlboro', and Buccleuch,



Digitized by Google

And not from senate, nor from field alone,
The mantle of a glorious past is thrown,
Nor least on him whose lineage may recall
England's old Empire and her Admiral.

After his retirement from the House of Commons my grandfather lived a country life at Woburn in Bedfordshire, in Crowholt Lodge, a house placed at his disposal by the Duke of Bedford, his chief hobbies and delights in life being cricket and hunting. He was a regular attendant at Lord's during the summer and the oldest living member of the M.C.C. for many years. He figures in the famous old print of 'Cricket at Brighton'.

During the winter he was a most ardent follower of hounds and hunted regularly up to the time of his death, in 1894, at the age of eighty-seven. I remember how he used to tick me off for referring after a day's hunting to 'the fox'. "I don't know what you mean by 'the fox'," he used to say. "If you speak of Mr. Fox, or the gallant Fox, I can converse with you, but otherwise not."

One evening, after a long day's hunting, he was sitting reading when some noise under his arm-chair disturbed him. The butler (Henry Rodda) was sent for and asked to explain the noise. "It's the dog chewing your false teeth, my lord," was the reply. Such are some of my reminiscences of the dear old man.

My father and mother were married at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and eventually produced a very large family, of which I was the third. My father retired from the Army in 1872 by what was possible in those days—the sale of his commission, the figure paid for his majority being, so far as I remember, £5,000. My grandfather, being then Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons, as already related, had official quarters in Speaker's Court, and placed them at the disposal of my father and mother for their residence. My sister was actually born in these historic precincts, almost plumb under Big Ben; and here we mischievous children lived. We used to take our morning outings with our nurses on the terrace of the House, alongside the river.

An untoward incident befell. We were being shown the Speaker's Mace, and a clumsy attendant, placing it carelessly across my arms, I dropped it on to my foot, nearly crushing it and making me so lame that for months any grown-ups there were about had to carry me pick-a-back.

Our nursery suite had what was unusual in houses of that time—a huge, full-length, built-in hot and cold bath in which we used to swim little metal fish and boats, drawing them about by a magnet.

My father became extremely religious, and about the time of his retirement was caught in the vortex of an evangelical revivalist



Digitized by Google

movement of those days, headed by Lord Radstock, Lord Adelbert Cecil, Major Hatton Turner, author of *Astra Castra*, and other enthusiasts.

Sometimes his habit of handing people tracts—a selection of which he always carried about with him—led to unexpected and sometimes amusing results. Travelling by train in the Isle of Wight, he saw opposite him a man with an extremely red nose. My father produced a tract. "Excuse me, sir," he said to this red-nosed man, "will you please accept this." My brother, who was looking over the man's shoulder, noticed that the tract had the title 'The Drunkard's Fate'. The man took the tract with a "Thank you, sir," but when he had noted the title he remarked indignantly: "If this is what you refer to, sir," clasping his nose with his hand as though to hide it, "allow me to say that this is not drink, but h-indigestion!"

My father, when a young man in the Rifle Brigade, was very gay and liked horse-racing. He was at a race meeting on one occasion, immaculately dressed and wearing a white top-hat, when he was suddenly hit on the head. When he looked behind for the assailant another man stole his watch. That was the end of horse-racing for my father. My father was a strict disciplinarian, and I can remember as a boy that when I came down late to breakfast—as I often did—he would, as a punishment, order me to copy out some hymn a dozen times. One of these hymns, I recollect, was 'Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou sore distrest?' I can assure you that I was all three before I had finished copying out that hymn! He ordered the whole of the staff, indoor and outdoor, to attend prayers at 8 o'clock every morning, and each of us took a turn at reading a verse of Scripture. As I read 'And they searched Jerusalem with a candle' I made the remark, 'They must have had a job', whereupon I was told to be quiet as it was quite true!

My mother was extremely handsome, and quite different in character from my father, being always vivacious and amusing. It was told of her that when she was dying, the family doctor who came to visit her was looking grave and said that if she wanted to see any of her sons she ought to send for them. She turned to him and said, "Don't look so glum, Doctor. If anybody is going to die it's myself and not you!"

As children we were all brought up at Woburn, Bedfordshire, our house being just outside the gates of Woburn Park, ancestral seat of the Dukes of Bedford, and home of the Russell family, of which, as I have mentioned, my mother was a member. One of my childhood recollections is of the two great lions which surmounted the entrance gates to the Park. When I was very naughty—as I'm



Digitized by Google

afraid I often was—I was told that these lions would come from their pedestals and eat me!

There was an underground passage from our house across to Woburn Abbey—about two miles away. This old passage was full of rats, bats and mice and, to our childish minds, of bogey-men also. Once, when I had been exceptionally troublesome, the governess pushed me into this passage. When she came to peep in at me, soon afterwards, she expected to find me dissolved in tears and very repentant, but she was disappointed. Having heard her coming, I peeped through the keyhole and called out, "I see you," which disarmed her completely.

The first school I went to was a very small affair kept by two old ladies. While I was there my grandfather, Lord Charles Russell, meeting me one day, asked me what place I occupied in my class, and I said I was second. This pleased him and, putting his hand in his pocket, he gave me half-a-crown. Some time after this he asked me how many there were in the school. I said, "Two!" He did not ask me to return his half-a-crown.

We were always up to mischief. In a field near us there was a pugnacious old bull. One day, having found a wasps' nest in the field, I tied a big piece of red cloth to the hedge near the nest, to attract the bull's attention. Sure enough, the bull came charging angrily and upset that wasps' nest. The wasps, as angry as the bull, swarmed around him, and he went tearing madly around the field with his tail up, snorting loudly and pursued by a cloud of the infuriated insects!

Our Spanish donkey played a part in all our holiday trips and games, but he was a cunning and very temperamental brute. Sometimes, when he got tired of us, he would just kick us off his back and go galloping home; or he would vary this trick by running suddenly under a wooden fence, leaving whoever might be on his back hanging on the rails! Occasionally he would aim a kick at us, and refuse to move a yard. This same animal was the means of all of us learning to ride.



Digitized by Google

# POSTCRIPT.

Now I have come to the end of my story. The war has brought us stern lessons and has done more for aviation in a year or two than could have been done in a lifetime of peace. I have no desire to blow my own trumpet; my dominating aim throughout the years has been to place this country ahead of all others in the control of the air. Even now the possibilities of aviation are unlimited.

A soldier who was killed in a distant country in the last war left the request that, should he fall, this should be his epitaph:

> Think well of us, O Land for which we fell.
> If all goes well with England, all will be well.
> Keep her bright banners free from spot or stain,
> Lest we should dream that we have died in vain.

In conclusion, I cannot do better than quote and endorse the words written by the American, John Alden Carpenter, in his work, entitled *Song of Faith*: 'I close this last solemn act of my life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God . . . we must not yet despair, the game is yet in our hands. Let us have a Government by which our lives and our liberties shall be secured.'

So ends thirty-four years of my work in civil aviation, trying to prepare this country for its conquest of the air, the great highway of the world.



Digitized by Google

# INDEX


ABERCORN, DUCHESS OF (great-aunt), 162
Ader, Clement, 56
Aero Club, Royal, 62, 71
Aeroplane Club of Great Britain and Ireland, 60–63, 68, 70–73
Allenby, Lord, 103, 142
Antrim, Lord, 36–8
Asquith, H. H. (first Earl of Oxford), 68, 87
Automobile Association, 63

B

BADEN-POWELL, MAJOR, 67
Bailey, Lieut.-Colonel, 128
Baldwin, Lord, 101–3
Barnato, Capt. Woolf, 122
Beatty, Admiral, 40
Beecham, Lady, 123
Bell, Alexander Graham, 79
Bikaner, H. H. Maharajah of, 22, 92, 129–32
Billing, Pemberton, 154
Birkbeck, Sir Edward, 37
Blanchard, Mr., 55
Blériot, Louis, 56, 57–8, 63, 64, 65, 66–7, 68, 69, 70, 74
Blyth, Lord, 67
Bombay Plague Commission, 33–5
Borghese, Prince, 46–8, 62
Bowles, Comdr. Geoffrey, 148–9
Boyle, the Hon. Allen, 74
Brown, Capt., 14–15
Buckman, Dr. Frank, 123–4
Burdett-Coutts, Mr., 97, 99
Butler, Hedges, 62, 67, 79–80

C

CASTLEROSSE, LORD, *quoted*, 102
Cayley, Sir George, 55
Chamberlain, Neville, 102
Champion de Crespigny, Sir Claude, 62
Chanute, Mr., 60
Chapman, Rev. Hugh, 97
Charles, Professor, 55
Christian, H.R.H. Prince, 87–8
Churchill, Winston, 154
Cockburn, G. R., 56, 69
Cody, "Colonel", 56, 67, 71, 72, 73, 85
Connaught, H.R.H. Duke of, 125–6, 161
Cook, Sir Theodore, 73
Cooke, Sir Clement Kinloch, 94
Cros, Arthur du, 67
Crosfield, Mr., 112
Curtiss, Glen H., 57, 69, 70

D

DAVIES, KEITH, 75, 79, 80
Dawes, Capt., 80
Dawson, Sir Philip, 100, 101
Delagrange, Leon, 62, 69, 72–3
Dimsdale, Sir Joseph, 62
Dobbin, Lieut., 24
Driver, E., 85, 86
Dumont, Santos, 56, 57, 60, 74

E

EDWARD VII, H. M. KING, 39–40, 43, 48, 121, 123, 132
Edward, H.R.H. Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor), 132–4
Edwards, J. Hugh, 154, 155
Elgin, H.E. Earl of, Viceroy of India, 30
Enlbron, N., 69

F

FALLE, CAPT., 125
Fallières, President, 69
Farman, Henry, 56, 57, 62, 69, 70, 74
Ferber, Capt., 62, 67, 69
Fernandez, 69
Foch, Marshal, 150
Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Henry, 123–4
Fournier, Henry, 69, 70
French, Sir John, 69
Frost, F. E., 67




Digitized by Google

G

GATACRE, GEN. SIR WILLIAM, 33, 34–5
George V., H. M. King, 64, 78, 82, 85, 130
Germany, Crown Prince of (1911), 81
Gladstone, Tony, 122–3
Gobron, Jean, 69
Gore-Browne, Lady Muriel, 25–6
Greswell, Clement, 85, 86

H

HADFIELD, SIR ROBERT, 101
Haig, Douglas (first Earl), 92, 149–50
Haldane, Lord, 63
Hamel, Gustav, 85, 86, 87, 89, 145
Harbord, Sir Arthur, 99
Hatton-Turnor, Mr., 42
Heaton, Henniker, 67, 79
Henson, Mr., 55, 56
Herbert, Mr., King's Messenger, 41
Hertzog, General, 123, 126
Hewett, Sir John and Lady, 78
Hext, Admiral Sir John, 30, 35
Holland, Capt., 24
Hubert, Charles, 85, 86, 87
Huddlestone, Lieut. Ernest, 25, 26–8, 30
Hughes, Mr. 43

I

IMERETINSKY, PRINCESS, 122
Indian Navy, Royal (Indian Marines), 17–19

J

JAIPUR, H.H. MAHARAJAH OF, 137
Jeffery, Rees, 63
Jeffries, Mr., 55
Jehan, Shah, 134
Johnson, Amy, *quoted*, 74
Jones, C., 103

K

KAVANKO, GENERAL (Russian Army), 42
Kelly, Ned, 116
Kelvin, Lord, 150
Kennedy, Admiral Sir William, 19, 62
Kerr, Admiral Mark, 145
Kidston, Audrey (step-daughter), 97
Kidston, Capt. Glen, 97
Kidston, Lieut.-Commdr. Glen (step-son), 96, 97, 121–3
Kidston, Lieut. Home (step-son), 97, 119
King's Royal Rifles, 24, 27, 29
Kishengarh, H.H. Maharajah of, 76, 92
Kluytmer, T., 69
Kritch, Mr., 47

L

LAMBERT, COUNT DE, 64, 69
Langley, Professor, 56, 57
Latham, Hubert, 57, 64–7, 69, 70
Laurent, E., 69
Lawlor, Mr. (Johannesburg), 122
Lawson, H. J., 43, 44
Leblon, Hubert, 69, 72
Lefebre, 69–70
Legagneux, M., 69
Leisham, Mr. 41–2
Lendon, W. W., 84
Lesseps, M. de, 66
Levavasseur, M., 69
Lloyd George, David, 67, 101, 102
Long, Walter, 67
Lonsdale, Lord, 106
Lunardi, 55
Lygon, the Hon. R., 67

M

MCCORQUODALE, G. F., 110
MacDonald, Ramsay, 101–2
Mackenzie, Squadron-Leader, 54
McLean, Sir Francis, 150
Malleson, Major-Gen. Sir W., *quoted*, 149–50
Mansfield, P. & O. Officer, 22–3
Marconi, Signor, 68
Marlat (Indian), Princess, 81
Maxim, Sir Hiram, 56
Mayhew, Lieut.-Col. Mark, 50–51
Menges, Isolde, 97
Merchant Naval Service, 16, 37, 97–8
Montagu, Lord, 120, *quoted*, 40–41



Digitized by Google

Moore-Brabazon, Col. J. T. C., 57, 74, 156
Motor Union, 63
Mottram, J., 110, *quoted*, 112–13
Murray, Lieut. Francis, 150

N

NICHOLSON, SIR ARTHUR, 92, 116
Northcliffe, Lord, 59, 64, 66, 154–5
Nuffield, Lord, 102, 103

P

PARSONS, THE HON. CHARLES A., 57
Paulhan, Louis, 69, 70, 74
Pelterie, Pesnault, 69
Pequet, M., 75, 76, 79, 80
Perry, Lord (formerly Sir Percival), 44, 95
Plymouth, Earl of, 62
Ponsonby, Lieut.-Col., 62
Poole, Lewis, 84, 85, 86
Port, Lieut., 145

R

RANJITSINJHI, PRINCE, 62, 107
Reading, Lady, 129, 131
Reading, H.E. Lord (Viceroy of India), 130–33
Rhodes, Cecil, 123, 125, 126
Rhodes, Col. Frank, 125
Rice, Dr. Hamilton, 23
Roberts, Lord, 52
Roe, A. V., 56, 57, 67, 77
Rolls, the Hon. C. S., 51, 67, 74
Rothermere, Lord, 59, 99, 101, 102, 148
Rougier, H., 69, 70
Rouguet, Louis, 69
Royce, Mr., 51
Rozier, Pilatre de, 55
Russell, Lord, 52
Russell, Lord Charles James Fox (grandfather), 98, 161–2, 163, 165
Russell, Lord John (great-uncle), 162

S

SADLER, WINDHAM, 55
Salmond, Air Vice-Marshal Sir John, 86
Samuel, Sir Herbert (afterwards Lord), 82, 88–9
Scott, Capt. R. F., 86, *quoted* 18
Seshadri, K., *quoted*, 80–81
Shackleton, Sir Ernest, 68
Singh, Sir Pertab, 92, 135, 136, 137–40
Sirohi, H.H. Maharajah of, 46
Smijth-Windham, Francis Wentworth (uncle), 160–61
Smith-Windham, William Russell (nephew), 161
Smyth, Dame Ethel, 41
Smyth-Windham, Major G. (father), 22, 160, 161, 163–4
Smyth-Windham, Capt. Joseph (grandfather), 161–63
Somner, Roger, 69
Sopwith, Mr., 74
Stanley, Sir Arthur, 53
Startin, Admiral, 92
Stewart, Hon. Mrs. Keith, 97
Stone, Sir Benjamin, 67
Strathcona, Lord, 96
Stringfellow, John, 56
Swinton, Lord, 102, 103
Sylvester, Dr., 30–31

T

TAJ MAHAL, 134
Taylor, Capt. Duplat, 125
Teck, Duke of, 87, 88
Templer, Col. J. L. B., 62
Theebaw, King of Burma, 20, 21, 81
Thornton, Percy, 60, 98
Tissandier, Paul, 69
Trotter, General, 125
Truscott, Sir George Wyatt, 68
Tynedale-Biscoe, Canon, 128

V

VARILLA, E, BUNEAU, 69
Vaux, Count de la, 71
Verdon-Roe, Mr., 74



Digitized by Google

Veuillemin, Gen. (French Air Force), 152–3
Victoria, H.R.H. Princess, 43
Voisin, M., 56, 62

W

WALKER, COL. FORESTIER, 23
Wallace, Roger, 71
*Warren Hastings*, Wreck of the, 23–33
Waters, Lieut., 22
White, Grahame, 58
Wilhelm II, German Emperor, 31, 41
Windham, Ashe (uncle), 161
Windham, Ashe (nephew), 131
Windham, Major Ashe (cousin), 53
Windham, Bay (newphew), 131
Windham, Gen. Sir Charles Ashe, 160
Windham, Lieut.-Col. C. J. (brother), 21, 46, 49–50, 127, 128, 131, 141
Windham, Lady (wife), 97, 121, 127, 141
Windham, Comdr. Sir Walter:
Ancestry, 156–65
Life at sea, 11–16
Joins Royal Naval Reserve, 16
Service in Indian Marines, 17–33
Secretary, Bombay Plague Commission, 33–5
Inspector of Lifeboats, 35–8
King's Messenger, 38–43
Pioneering of motoring, 43–50, 53–4
Major, Motor Volunteer Corps, London, 51–2
Aeroplane building and pioneer work, 55–74
Windham, Comdr. Sir Walter (*contd.*):
Visit to India with Aeroplane Exhibition (1910), 75–82
Institutes Aerial post in India, 75, 77–80
Institutes Coronation Aerial Post (1911), 82–90
War Service (1914–16), 90–7
Marriage (1917), 97
Parliamentary Conservative candidate (1918), 98–101
Starts Working Men's Club, Forest Hill, 103
Freeman of City of London (1932), 103
Connection with Oxford Group Movement, 104, 123–4
President, Field Trials Association, 104–6
On Salmon fishing, 106, 114
Visits to Shetland Islands, 114–21
Visits to South Africa, 121–7
Second visit to India (1920), 127–41
Visit to Egypt, 142
Visit to Palestine, 142–3
Return to England via Italy, 144
Warnings *re* aviation in wartime, 145–56
Recruiting for R.A.F. (1938), 151–3
Invents airmen's heated gloves and boots, 156
Windham, William, 160
Wood, A. J., 107–9
Wood, Gen, Sir Evelyn, 51
Wood, Sir Kingsley, 103, 151
Wright, Orville, 56, 57, 69, 74
Wright, Wilbur, 56, 57, 60, 69, 74
Wyndham, the Hon. Hugh, 157



Digitized by Google

MAR 18 1946

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY-LIBRARY
LOAN

APR 4 1967

LD 21-100m-7,'40 (6936s)

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google